



Durham E-Theses

Sketching the 'Sôtêria Tou Biou' : Plato and the art of measurement

Parsons, Clare

How to cite:

Parsons, Clare (2007) *Sketching the 'Sôtêria Tou Biou' : Plato and the art of measurement*, Durham theses, Durham University. Available at Durham E-Theses Online: <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/1320/>

Use policy

The full-text may be used and/or reproduced, and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes provided that:

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a [link](#) is made to the metadata record in Durham E-Theses
- the full-text is not changed in any way

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Please consult the [full Durham E-Theses policy](#) for further details.

Sketching the 'Sôtêria Tou Biou'

Plato and the Art of Measurement

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author or the university to which it was submitted. No quotation from it, or information derived from it may be published without the prior written consent of the author or university, and any information derived from it should be acknowledged.

Clare Parsons

University of Durham

Department of Classics & Ancient History

PhD 2007



18 APR 2008

Table of Contents

| Chapter | | Page |
|---------------------|---|------------|
| | Introduction & Executive Summary | |
| Chapter 1 | Planning the Sketch (<i>Protagoras</i> 309a – 351b) | 1 |
| Chapter 2 | Creating the Sketch (<i>Protagoras</i> 351b – 357e) | 34 |
| Chapter 3 | Evaluating the Sketch (<i>Protagoras</i> 358a – 362a) | 69 |
| Chapter 4 | Challenging the <u>metrêtikê technê</u> (<i>Gorgias</i> 447a – 506e) | 93 |
| Chapter 5 | Refining the Sketch; <u>aretê</u> as Measurement of Order (<i>Gorgias</i> 501a – 507e) | 116 |
| Chapter 6 | Justice in the <i>Republic</i> as the Art of Measurement? | 134 |
| Chapter 7 | Knowledge and Due Measure in the <i>Statesman</i> | 164 |
| Conclusion | Completing the Sketch | 184 |
| Bibliography | | 188 |

Sketching the ‘Sôtêria Tou Biou’

Plato and the Art of Measurement

Introduction and Executive Summary

In this thesis, I aim to demonstrate that measurement is an important and dynamic theme through which Plato explores the nature of aretê in a range of dialogues covering the early, middle and later periods of his work.

In chapters 1 - 3, I will explore the origin of this theme in the *Protagoras*’ metrêtikê technê¹ – an art which involves the maximisation of pleasure in our lives through measurement. I suggest that Socrates presents the metrêtikê technê as a sketch of the type of wisdom which would be sufficient for aretê and which, as such, has the potential to be ‘the salvation of our lives’.² He shows how the metrêtikê technê can bring determinacy and accuracy to the decisions we have to make about how we should live, because it is founded upon an objective and quantifiable standard for a good life. In addition, through its foundation on hedonism, it offers an account of our motivation to act consistently upon our knowledge of what is right to do.

I will argue that, long after the *Protagoras*, Plato remains committed to the metrêtikê technê. While often regarded as an ad hominem device or as tongue-in-cheek, the idea of a metrêtikê technê is, in fact, hugely important in shaping Plato’s account of aretê. In chapters 4 – 6 I will trace the refinement of this sketch of aretê through the *Gorgias* and *Republic*. Driving the process of refinement for Plato is the challenge of combining the practical strengths which he remains convinced that a metrêtikê technê offers with his emerging account of a good and truly pleasant life as dependent upon order [kosmos] in the individual soul and in the state.

From this process of refinement, as I will discuss in the final chapter, the basilikê technê,³ the statesman’s art, emerges in the *Statesman* as the basis of aretê in the state. The basilikê technê entails measurement of order in the state against the standard of ‘due measure’ [to metrion]. This art retains the key strengths of the original metrêtikê technê, whilst responding to its weaknesses. So, in completing the portrait of the statesman, Socrates also completes a sketch of aretê as measurement which he began in the *Protagoras*.

¹ Which Socrates introduces at *Protagoras* 357a.

² *Protagoras* 357a6 – 7.

³ *Statesman* 311c5.

Sketching the ‘Sôtêria Tou Biou’

Plato and the Art of Measurement

Chapter 1 – Planning the Sketch

(*Protagoras* 309a – 351b)

1.1 A sketch of wisdom

In the *Protagoras*, at 357a6 – 7, Socrates introduces a model of knowledge as the art of measurement [metrêtikê technê] and praises it extravagantly as ‘the salvation of our lives’ [hê sôtêria tou biou]. In this chapter and the next, I will argue that Socrates makes this claim because he regards the metrêtikê technê as a preliminary sketch of what knowledge must be like if it is to provide the basis for living a good life. As with any sketch, it will require revision and the adding of further detail,¹ but Socrates is suggesting that it does capture the essential features of a model of knowledge which would be sufficient for aretê. The metrêtikê technê sets out the defining characteristics of a form of wisdom which, if we were to achieve it in practice, would save our lives. It would do this by ensuring that our lives are truly good, thus protecting our souls from the dangers of a bad life founded upon a false conception of wisdom.

In putting forward this argument, I hope to challenge those who regard the metrêtikê technê as no more than an ad hominem device.² I will argue that it represents a real and valid answer, albeit one which may require modification, to the central question Socrates raises in the *Protagoras* – what type of knowledge would be sufficient for us to live a good life?

In order to demonstrate that Plato/Socrates does see the metrêtikê technê as serving this purpose and that this explains the bold claim Socrates makes for it, I will examine the structure of the *Protagoras* as a whole - a dialogue which takes place in the home of Callias where a number of sophists, most notably Protagoras, and their

¹ In the next chapter I will discuss the evidence that Socrates fully recognises the preliminary nature of his sketch of wisdom.

² This view is adopted by, for example, Sullivan (1961), Dyson (1976), Zeyl (1980) and Stokes (1986, pp. 358 - 49).



followers have gathered. In this chapter I will look at the first part of the dialogue, up to 351b, and will attempt to show that this part of the dialogue plans and prepares for a sketch of the type of knowledge which is sufficient for a good life³ - a sketch which will be undertaken later in the dialogue. In particular, it identifies the features which must be in the sketch. Just as an artist, in preparation for a portrait, would consider which features are essential to achieving a good resemblance, so in the same way Socrates prepares for a sketch of human wisdom. I will suggest that, as a result of his discussion with Protagoras and the other sophists up to 351b, he identifies two essential features. Firstly, the sketch must show (in other words, answer the question of) whether human wisdom is essentially technical or non-technical in nature. Secondly, it must show what type of life we must achieve through wisdom in order to preserve the safety of the soul.⁴

Is wisdom a technê?

Firstly, I will discuss how Socrates himself introduces and systematically pursues the question of whether wisdom is a technê. I will suggest that, throughout his conversation with Protagoras up to 351b, he explores and challenges the assumption that aretê is itself a technê, or is like a technê in any significant respect. In doing so, his approach is in contrast with many other Socratic dialogues where he draws an analogy between the two. Socrates' exploration of the relationship between wisdom and technê counts against those who argue that the model of wisdom as the metrêtikê technê, when it is introduced later in the dialogue, is no more than an ad hominem device which emerges in response to the arguments of the many. Instead it represents an answer to a question which Socrates himself has raised about the nature of knowledge - a question which is important to him and which has been there throughout the dialogue.

What type of life must wisdom achieve?

Secondly, I will suggest that the discussion up to 351b establishes that any practical⁵ sketch of the type of wisdom which is sufficient for a good life must take account of

³ The type of knowledge which Socrates describes as wisdom – sophia.

⁴ In the second introductory frame, 310a8 – 314c2, Socrates warns Hippocrates that the wrong sort of knowledge can endanger and damage the human soul.

⁵ Practical in the sense of enabling us not only to understand what a good life entails but also to achieve this in practice.

and reflect what a good life entails. It is, in fact, Protagoras who first makes this point. He complains on several occasions that they are discussing aretê in vague and ambiguous terms, without reference to any clearly defined standard for a good life.⁶ As a result, their discussion results in a series of 'dead ends' which, taken together, represent a positive statement of the need to identify and agree a standard for a good life upon which a practical sketch of wisdom can be founded. This statement is reinforced in a long digression from the central discussion (334d – 338e) which is prompted by Socrates' objecting to the length of Protagoras' answers. Socrates and Protagoras cannot agree about how long their answers should be⁷ and it looks as though their discussion is going to grind to a halt. However, the assembled company helps them to resolve their differences and they eventually agree upon a way forward. They agree (or, at least, reluctantly accept) that the appropriate standard for their answers will be to metrion mêkos (338b1). While this digression is apparently concerned with dialectical procedure - with the way Socrates and Protagoras conduct their conversation - I will suggest that it does have direct relevance to the actual subject of their conversation. It prompts the reader to recognise that, although Socrates and Protagoras have now established a clear dialectical standard, they still lack a clear standard for a good life upon which to base their sketch of wisdom. Thus the digression reinforces the criticism that Protagoras has been making throughout their discussion of aretê – that they are talking in vague and ambiguous terms, rather than referring specifically to what a good life entails.

In section six of this chapter I will suggest that when, at 351b, Socrates asks Protagoras what a good life [eu zên] entails, he begins the process of defining the standard they need and thus embarks upon his sketch of wisdom. A question which is often seen as a rather abrupt change of tack is, in fact, the point when Socrates puts pen to paper in a sketch he has been planning from the very beginning of the dialogue.

1.2 Establishing an enquiry into wisdom

The main dialogue of the *Protagoras* is preceded by three introductory frames. Taken together, these frames serve to:

⁶ I will argue that this should be our interpretation of Protagoras' objections at 331d1 – e4 and at 334a3 – c6.

⁷ Protagoras' standard is makrologia, whereas Socrates' standard is brachulogia.

- (i) establish knowledge as a priority within the dialogue;
- (ii) establish a concern, on Socrates' part, with identifying the type of knowledge which will enable us to live a good [kalon] life and which, in doing so, will preserve the safety of our souls;
- (iii) introduce a distinction between the knowledge required to perform a particular activity or profession and the knowledge (wisdom) which underpins a good life.

In the first frame (309a1 – 310a7), Socrates talks to an unnamed companion and updates him on what has been happening. The companion assumes that Socrates has been busy pursuing the handsome [kalos, 309a3] Alcibiades, but Socrates says that he has actually spent the day with Protagoras who caused him to virtually forget about Alcibiades. He claims that Protagoras is a finer man [tini kallioni, 309c2] than Alcibiades, because he is reputed to be the wisest man alive (309d1 – 2). This introductory conversation emphasises the overriding importance of wisdom to Socrates (outweighing any other concerns or preoccupations for him - even Alcibiades at his 'most delightful age', 309b1) and thus predicts its importance and central role within the subsequent dialogue.

The first frame also establishes to kalon as a standard of value within the dialogue for what is good and, therefore, desirable in living our lives. Socrates and his companion compare Alcibiades and Protagoras on this basis and Socrates argues that Protagoras is kalliôn on account of his wisdom. Taylor (1991, pp. 64 – 65) points out that this is resonant of Diotima's account in the *Symposium* of 'erotic education', where the lover proceeds from loving physical beauty to loving moral and intellectual beauty and, from there, to higher forms of beauty, culminating in beauty itself. However, the prominence of this standard of value in the introductory frame also predicts its importance within the arguments of the *Protagoras* itself where, in the search to find the type of wisdom which enables us to live a good life, to kalon is the principal criterion by which a good life is judged. Protagoras makes clear that he will not accept an account of aretê that does not fulfil this criterion⁸ and Socrates takes care to establish that the account he proposes will also result in a life which is kalon.⁹

⁸ For example, at 351c1 – 2.

⁹ For example, at 358b3 – 6.

In the second frame (310a8 – 314c2) Socrates makes clear that his concern with wisdom does not manifest itself in an unquestioning admiration of all those who claim to possess it, but instead in a desire to examine such claims. He describes how Hippocrates, a young friend of his, woke him up before day-break because he had heard that Protagoras was in town. Hippocrates is very excited to hear of Protagoras' arrival, and keen to become his pupil. Since it is far too early to call upon Callias, with whom Protagoras is staying, Socrates uses the time to question Hippocrates about what he hopes to learn by becoming Protagoras' pupil. He asks Hippocrates to consider what type of knowledge Protagoras actually teaches and what effect this will have on Hippocrates' soul. Socrates warns that immeasurable damage can be done to one's soul by gaining the wrong sort of wisdom, just as we can damage our physical health by eating the wrong sort of food. In the case of the soul, Socrates suggests, the danger is greater because we cannot carry our learning away in a separate container and inspect it before we consume it. We must take extra care, in our pursuit of wisdom, to avoid the potential dangers to the soul. These dangers are stressed in this frame¹⁰ and Socrates makes clear that the preservation and safety of our soul depend upon us pursuing only the right sort of wisdom. He thus establishes from the outset a concern with identifying the type of wisdom which will keep our souls safe. The introductory frame lays the foundation for a search for this type of wisdom - a search which will culminate in the discovery of the metrêtikê technê – which, Socrates will claim, is the only source of safety for our lives [hê sôtêria tou biou, 357a6 – 7].

In the second frame, Socrates also introduces an important distinction between the type of wisdom which we need to carry out a particular activity or profession and the type which we need in order to give a good life. Hippocrates is embarrassed to admit that he wants to become a professional sophist. Socrates suggests that, perhaps, he does not seek the skills of professional sophistry from Protagoras but, rather, a general education for his life as a free citizen:

'But then perhaps that isn't the sort of study you expect to have with Protagoras, but rather the sort you had with the reading master and the music teacher and the trainer. You didn't learn any of these in a technical way [epi technêi], with a view to

¹⁰ The potential danger [kindunos] is emphasised at 313a2&3, 314a1&2 and the need to ensure that what Hippocrates learns from Protagoras is safe [asphales] at 313e4. The potentially damaging [ponêron] effects of wisdom are made clear at 313a4 - 8, 313d2, 313e4.

becoming a professional yourself, but simply for their educational value [epi paideiai], as an amateur and a gentleman should.' (312a7 – b4, Taylor, 1991)

I will suggest in the next section of this chapter that Socrates' subsequent discussion with Protagoras will explore and challenge the relationship between the technical knowledge we need to carry out a specific activity or job (knowledge of a technê) and the knowledge we need to live our lives. The introductory frame introduces this distinction and thus lays the foundation of the subsequent discussion.

The third frame (314c3 – 317e2) describes the eventual arrival of Socrates and Hippocrates at Callias' house and gives a detailed description of the scene inside the house where the rest of the dialogue will take place. The house is full of people who claim to be wise and to teach wisdom, and of their followers who have an unquestioning admiration for their wisdom. Hippocrates (and the reader) is now aware, however, of the potential danger to the souls of both teachers and pupils. The stropky doorkeeper, who represents a physical barrier to Hippocrates' entry into the world of the sophists (314c – e), reminds us that Socrates has also created a barrier in Hippocrates' mind. This barrier has curbed his eagerness to meet Protagoras to the point where he is happy to stand outside his house and finish a conversation before entering, when only a few hours ago he was waking Socrates up before dawn because he was so excited about meeting Protagoras.¹¹ It will prevent Hippocrates from becoming a devoted admirer of Protagoras until he is satisfied that it is safe (for his soul) to do so. The resistance Socrates has created in Hippocrates' mind contrasts with the openness of Protagoras' followers to his teaching – an openness which is illustrated, physically, by their care never to stand in his way.¹²

Taken together, the three introductory frames not only prepare the ground for an enquiry into the nature of wisdom, but also establish the values which will drive this enquiry. We know that the dialogue will seek to find the type of wisdom which underpins a life which is good [kalon] and thus protects the safety of our souls. In

¹¹ The gradual arrival of dawn during the introductory frames illustrates Hippocrates' gradual awareness of the potential dangers of becoming Protagoras' pupil. Socrates draws attention to the gradual process of enlightenment: 'He blushed – day was already beginning to break, so that I could see him - and replied, "If it's like what we said before, obviously I should be hoping to become a sophist".' (312a2 – 4, Taylor, 1991)

¹² Socrates describes how 'I was absolutely delighted by this procession [of Protagoras' followers], to see how careful they were that nobody ever got in Protagoras' way, but whenever he and his companions turned round, those followers of his turned smartly outwards in formation to left and right, wheeled round and so every time formed up in perfect order behind him.' (315b2 – 8, Taylor, 1991)

particular, it will explore whether or not this knowledge is a technê. The metrêtikê technê will ultimately emerge as the type of wisdom which can fulfil these criteria.

1.3 Technê as a 'lens' for the enquiry

Socrates begins his enquiry by asking Protagoras (318a ff.) how Hippocrates will benefit from becoming Protagoras' pupil. Protagoras' first answers are vague but, eventually, he offers a clear description of his profession:

'What I teach is the proper management of one's own affairs, how best to run one's household, and the management of public affairs, how to make the most effective contribution to the affairs of the city both by word and action.' (318e5 – 319a2, Taylor, 1991)

It thus becomes clear that Protagoras is offering to teach what Hippocrates wants to learn, and that there is a basis for further discussion between them. Protagoras is concerned with teaching the wisdom that will help Hippocrates to live well, both in his private life and in his public life as a citizen. This seems entirely in line with what, as Socrates has helped him to clarify (312a7 – b6), Hippocrates wants to learn from Protagoras. So, it is worth their while to stay and talk further with Protagoras.

Having established what type of wisdom Protagoras claims to teach, Socrates raises the question of whether such wisdom is actually teachable.

'Have I understood you correctly, then, I said. You seem to me *to be professing the art of being a citizen* [tên politikên technên, 319a4], and to be promising to make men into good citizens.

[Protagoras] That, Socrates, he said, is precisely what I undertake to do.

[Socrates] It's a splendid *technique* [technêma] *to have acquired* [kektêsai], I said, if you have in fact *acquired it* (for I shall not say, particularly to you, anything other than what I really think). I didn't think that that was something that could be taught, but since you say that you teach it I don't see how I can doubt you.' (319a3 – b1, Taylor, 1991 *amended*)¹³

¹³ Cf. Taylor's original translation: 'Have I understood you correctly, then, I said. You seem to me to be talking about the art of running a city [tên politikên technên], and to be promising to make men into good citizens.

[Protagoras] That, Socrates, he said, is precisely what I undertake to do.

In this passage, Socrates carefully re-frames the description which Protagoras gave of his profession at 318e5 – 319a2 as the bold claim that the wisdom that underpins a good life as a citizen is just another technê. He suggests, specifically, that Protagoras is claiming that:

- (a) there is a technê of being a good citizen (319a3 – 4)
- (b) he has mastery of this technê (319a8 – 9), and
- (c) he can teach this technê to others, thus making them good citizens (319a4 – 5).

Taylor's translation of legein at 319a4 as 'talking about' does not bring Socrates' point out clearly. His point is not that Protagoras is simply 'talking about' a technê of good citizenship – but that he is making the bold and controversial claim that such a technê exists. I would, therefore, suggest translating legein as 'profess', in order to emphasise Protagoras' confirmed belief in the existence of such a technê. Taylor translates kektêsai (319a8 - 9) as 'discovered'. This does not, however, convey Socrates' suggestion that Protagoras is claiming to have mastered this technê. I have, therefore, translated it as 'acquired'.

If Protagoras' claims are true, Socrates suggests, then he has acquired a fine technique [technêma]. Taylor's translation of technêma as 'thing' does not convey adequately that Socrates is representing Protagoras' statement of his profession as a statement about the technical nature of wisdom. I have adopted instead Lombardo and Bell's translation (1992) of technêma as technique. The word technêma, however, has implications not only of technique and craftsmanship but also of deceit and trickery. Socrates' use of this word leads us to view Protagoras' claims critically. Protagoras is treating the wisdom required to live a good life as a technê which we can learn in much the same way as we learn, for example, the flute. But in doing so is he really offering us a practical means of living a good life or is he just tricking us?

I will attempt to demonstrate in the remainder of this chapter (and in chapter 2) how the question of whether wisdom can be a technê underpins Socrates' enquiry into wisdom. At this stage, however, I would just like to draw attention to the important role of 319a3 – b1 in establishing this question. Socrates carefully reframes

[Socrates] It's a splendid thing [technêma] to have discovered [kektêsai], I said, if you have in fact discovered it (for I shall not say, particularly to you, anything other than what I really think). I didn't think that that was something that could be taught, but since you say that you teach it I don't see how I can doubt you.'

Protagoras' description of his profession and suggests that Protagoras is making the bold claim that living a good life as a citizen is a technê which can be taught and learnt like any other. At the same time, Socrates carefully chooses language which simultaneously casts doubt on this claim. Roochnik (1996) argues that in the *Protagoras* (and throughout the 'early' Socratic dialogues) Socrates' use of the technê analogy is not intended to present technê as a model or blueprint for aretê¹⁴ but rather as a 'lens' (p.14) through which to explore the respects in which aretê differs from a technê and thus to understand what aretê really entails.¹⁵ This certainly seems to be the case at this stage of the dialogue; Socrates' discussion of Protagoras' profession at 318e5 – 319a2 serves to put technê in place as a 'lens' through which we can explore and challenge whether the wisdom that is sufficient for aretê is like a technê in the sense that it can be systematically taught and learnt.¹⁶

Socrates' Opening Speech: 319a8 – 320c1

Our first view through this lens is provided by Socrates who, from 319b to 320c, offers a perspective on the question of whether wisdom is a technê. He explains that he had thought that the wisdom which underpins a good life is not a teachable technê which can be learnt, but a natural ability which is shared by everyone to some extent. To justify this opinion he describes how the Athenian assembly always calls upon experts for advice on matters which it regards as technical [en technêi, 319c7 - 8] but when it comes to the management of the city [peri tôn poleôs tês dioikêseôs, 319c8 – d1] it will accept advice from anyone, because it believes all are equally qualified. He goes on to describe how, in their private lives, good citizens have been unable to teach their ability to live well to their children, because this ability cannot be taught (Pericles' education of his own children is cited). So, Socrates suggests strongly that

¹⁴ Roochnik (1996, p.6) refers to this as the Standard Account of Technê (SAT) in the early Socratic Dialogues, an account which he challenges. He suggests that, according to this account, 'the [technê] analogy in the early dialogues provides a serious, positive theoretical model for the moral knowledge Socrates seeks.'

¹⁵ Roochnik (1996, p.13) compares Plato's use of technê to the use made by other fifth- and fourth-century authors who often began by asking the stock question of their subject, 'Is it really a technê?'. Roochnik suggests that: 'When an author asks of his own work, Is it a technê? he engages in a self-reflection that forces him to raise epistemological questions about both the nature of his subject matter and his cognitive access to it. As a result, these writings broach, with various degrees of explicitness, many of the same issues that surface when the X becomes moral knowledge as it does in the early Platonic dialogues.'

¹⁶ While I support Roochnik's view that in the *Protagoras* Socrates uses technê as a lens through which to view/understand what aretê entails, rather than just as a straightforward analogy for it, I will argue in the next chapter against his conclusion that the view through this lens shows a model of aretê which is essentially non-technical. Instead I will suggest that the technê lens ultimately shows that wisdom, if it is to be practical (in the sense of enabling us to achieve a good life in practice), must share some of the key characteristics of technê.

living a good life, either in the public arena of managing the state or as a private citizen, is not a technical ability which can be learnt or taught.

Socrates' language in his opening speech also carefully emphasises a distinction between the ability to perform a specific task/profession well and the ability to live a good life. The former is described as technê, the latter as aretê, and Socrates takes care not to blur this distinction. All the things which can be taught and learnt are summarised as being 'en technê', 319c7 - 8 – matters of technê; building and shipbuilding are cited as examples. They are the province of a craftsman [dêmiourgon, 319c2 - 3]. Socrates does not describe them as aretê at any point in his opening speech. Similarly, when he is talking about living a good life (either in managing the city well, or in one's personal life), he describes it *only* as aretê (*not technê*).¹⁷ Socrates takes great care to keep the language he uses to describe professional expertise entirely separate from the language he uses to describe living well. Only at one point does he blur this distinction when, just before his long speech, at 319a4, he summarises Protagoras' description of his profession as 'tên politikên technên'. Here, the ability to live well as a citizen *is* described as a technê. At this point, however, Socrates is speaking on Protagoras' behalf, not his own. He is summarising Protagoras' description of his own profession and, therefore, reflects Protagoras' failure (as Socrates sees it) to distinguish between aretê and technê in describing what he teaches.

Socrates' clear distinction between technê and aretê appears to be in sharp contrast with the way he uses technê in many other dialogues, as an analogy for aretê. However, the *Protagoras* does eventually result in the positive conclusion that aretê is a technê – the metrêtikê technê. I would suggest that it is for this reason that Socrates wants to demonstrate in this particular dialogue that he is not *assuming* any similarity between technê and aretê. Since the outcome of the dialogue is that aretê is a technê, he wants to make it clear that this conclusion is the result of sound dialectic and not of any unjustified assumptions about the relationship between aretê and technê. In order to do this, he begins by making a clear distinction between the two – a distinction which is noticeable by the absence of such a distinction in many other dialogues. Socrates' care in ensuring that he does not assume any similarity between technê and aretê is, I would suggest, evidence that he intends us to take it seriously when he does, eventually, identify the two.

¹⁷ 319e2, 320a3, 320b5, 320c1.

Protagoras' Speech: 320c2 – 328d2

Socrates has challenged Protagoras on three specific points about the relationship between aretê and technê. He has challenged whether:

- (a) there is a technê of being a good citizen;
- (b) this technê can be taught to others, thus making them good citizens;
- (c) Protagoras himself has mastery of this technê and is able to teach it to others.¹⁸

Protagoras responds to the first challenge – the challenge of proving that there is a technê of being a good citizen - by telling a muthos (320c2 – 322d5) about the creation of mortals by the gods. He describes how Prometheus and Epimetheus, on behalf of all the gods, distributed the attributes required for the preservation of mortal life. Epimetheus failed to provide for the human race at all and used up all their resources on ensuring the survival of animals. So, Prometheus stole technical wisdom [tên entechnon sophian, 321d1], together with fire, from Athena and Hephaestus, and gave this to the human race. This specialist expertise¹⁹ was not sufficient, however, to keep the human race safe. It enabled it to provide food for itself, but not to sustain the communities on which its long-term survival depended. Living in a community also required politikê technê, which Prometheus could not obtain for them as it was controlled by Zeus. So, the human race remained in danger of destruction until Zeus intervened and instructed Hermes to distribute justice (dikê) and conscience (aidôs) to all humans.

Aidôs and dikê are not identified directly as politikê technê within the muthos. Instead, Protagoras describes them, more poetically, as 'the principles of organization of cities and the bonds of friendship' (322c3, Taylor, 1991). I would suggest, however, that we are justified in taking them to represent politikê technê in the muthos and that it is important to Protagoras' argument that we do take them in this way. There are three main justifications for doing so. Firstly, we are told specifically that Zeus intervened because the human race lacked politikê technê and

¹⁸ I suggested above that these three claims are attributed to Protagoras by Socrates at 319a3 – b1 and that Socrates' first speech (319b1 ff.) challenges these claims.

¹⁹ Dêmiourgikê technê, 322b3. In this particular context, this is used by Protagoras to describe a skill which is held only by a limited group of specialist craftsmen. It becomes an important term within Protagoras' argument, when he contrasts dêmiourgikê technê with politikê technê which, he argues, is a non-specialist form of technê.

that he was concerned about the consequences of this lack. It seems reasonable, therefore, that he would intervene by providing politikê technê – not by providing something else. Secondly, the way aidôs and dikê are described in the muthos is entirely in line with the way politikê technê is described. We are told that politikê technê was required for humans to be able to gather together [hathroidzesthai, 322b6] in cities and communities, rather than living in scattered settlements [sporadên, 322b1]. Similarly, we are told that aidôs and dikê are the ‘ordering principles’ [kosmoi, 322c3] of cities and the ‘uniting bonds’ [desmoi...sunagôgoi, 322c3] of friendship. The essential features of aidôs and dikê – the ability to bring people together in harmonious communities - are the same as those of the politikê technê. Finally, Zeus suggests that Hermes should not distribute aidôs and dikê in the same way as the other technai were distributed [hôsper allôn technôn, 322d3 – 4], possibly implying that they are themselves technai. The failure to describe aidôs and dikê specifically as politikê technê, may just represent a choice on Protagoras’ behalf, to adopt a more ‘poetic’ description when describing something which is bestowed by Zeus.

If we do accept the identity of aidôs and dikê with politikê technê, then Protagoras’ muthos responds directly to Socrates’ first challenge. It suggests that excellence as a citizen is, indeed, a technê. In fact, it is the most important technê of all, upon which the survival of the human race ultimately depends.²⁰ At the same time the muthos demonstrates that Socrates’ reason for doubting its being a technê is unfounded. Socrates has presented the city’s failure to recognise *specialist*²¹ technical expertise on how the city should be managed as firm evidence that they do not acknowledge the existence of *any* technical expertise at all on this subject. Protagoras, through his muthos, suggests that Socrates is failing to distinguish between specialist and non-specialist technical expertise. Specialist technai are possessed only by a few, and this is sufficient to meet the needs of the whole community. Politikê technê, in contrast, is a non-specialist form of technê which must be held by everyone if the city is to flourish. This distinction between specialist and political technê is made very clear when Hermes asks how he must distribute politikê technê:

‘Now Hermes asked Zeus about the manner in which he was to give conscience [aidôs] and justice [dikê] to men: “Shall I distribute these in the same way as the

²⁰ Its importance is emphasised by the fact that it is described as ‘para tōi Dii’ (controlled by Zeus, 321d5) and we are told that none of the other gods could have access to it.

²¹ Specialist in the sense of being mastered by only a limited number of practitioners.

arts? These are distributed thus: one doctor is sufficient for many laymen, and so with the other experts [dêmiourgoi]. Shall I give justice and conscience to men in that way too, or distribute them to all?"

"To all", said Zeus, "and let all share in them; for cities could not come into being, if only a few shared in them as in the other arts. And lay down on my authority a law that he who cannot share in conscience and justice is to be killed as a plague on the city". (322c3 – d5, Taylor, 1991)

Protagoras goes on to spell out specifically how the muthos has responded to Socrates' argument. It has demonstrated why the Athenians will accept advice from all citizens as to how the city should be governed. This is *not* because they don't believe it is a technê, but because they recognise it is not a technê which is possessed only by a few specialist craftsmen, but one which is universal. Socrates, Protagoras implies, is just muddled about the nature of technê; he has wrongly assumed that each technê is the province of a specific expert [dêmiourgos]. In fact, some technai are held by everyone to some extent because human life itself depends upon it:

'So that, Socrates, is why when there is a question about how to do well in carpentry or any other expertise [allês tinos dêmiourgikês], everyone including the Athenians thinks it right that only a few should give advice, and won't put up with advice from anyone else, as you say – and quite right too, in my view – but when it comes to consideration of how to do well in running the city, which must proceed entirely through justice and soundness of mind, they are right to accept advice from anyone, since it is incumbent on everyone to share in that sort of excellence, or else there can be no city at all.' (322d5 – 323a3, Taylor, 1991)

The preservation [sôtêria] of life from destruction is a continuous theme throughout the muthos. Epimetheus ensures that animals are saved from destruction by the physical attributes he gives them,²² and Prometheus tries to do the same for humans by providing them with technê.²³ This does not prove to be enough for the preservation of human life, however, and Zeus, who is himself concerned about the

²² We are told that he devised for each animal a power [dunamin] to ensure their safety [eis sôtêrian, 320e3] from other animals. He kept some safe [esôizen, 321a1], for example, by their size, and took care to protect all animals from mutual destruction [allêlophthoriôn, 321a3]. He also ensured the safety [sôtêrian, 321b6] of those species which were a food-source for others, by making them prolific.

²³ Prometheus was at a loss as to how to secure the sôtêria of the human race [321c8] when all their resources had been used up on animals, and so stole technê from Athena and Hephaestus.

destruction of the human race, intervenes by providing politikê technê. Thus the survival of the human race is ensured. By emphasising this theme within the muthos, Protagoras refers to a concern which Socrates emphasised in the opening frame of the dialogue, namely that they should identify the type of wisdom which will keep their lives safe. He emphasises that the sôtêria which Socrates is seeking rests in the possession of a technê – ultimately, Socrates will agree with him (so the final conclusion of the dialogue is foreshadowed even at this early stage).

Protagoras has yet to respond to Socrates' second challenge, however, namely to show that politikê technê can be taught. If he is to uphold the claim which he has made in his muthos - that there is a politikê technê - he must demonstrate that this technê is teachable. Otherwise, its right to be regarded as a technê is in doubt.²⁴ To respond to this challenge, Protagoras moves away from using muthos and employs logos instead.²⁵ He refers first (323c – 324d) to the Athenians' punishment of those who are not good citizens. Their use of punishment, he claims, is evidence of their belief that good citizenship can be taught. Furthermore, he argues (323c – 326e) that, contrary to what Socrates has claimed, excellent citizens do indeed teach their children politikê technê; it is an integral part of every aspect of their upbringing and education, until they are adults. At this stage, the state assumes the role of educator, by subjecting them to its laws. The only reason (326e – 328b) why some of the children of excellent citizens do not appear to learn politikê aretê is that some have a much greater aptitude than others.

Having argued that excellence as a citizen is teachable, Protagoras replies to Socrates' third challenge – that is, to demonstrate that Protagoras himself has mastery of this technê. Protagoras explains that his mastery of this technê is evident from the way he charges his pupils (328b – c). He is sufficiently confident that his pupils will be satisfied that they have learnt political excellence from him, that he gives them the choice as to whether they pay him.

The language Protagoras uses throughout his argument makes clear that not only does he regard political excellence as a technê, but that, in fact, he believes aretê

²⁴ Roochnik (1996, p.26) argues that from a very early stage in the use of the word (from Homeric times), technê is taken to require 'mastery of rational principles that can be explained and, therefore, taught'.

²⁵ The precise stage at which he makes this transition is, however, hard to identify. From 322d to 323a, where he explains the relevance of the muthos to Socrates' argument, it can be claimed that he is still dealing with muthos. From 323a4 he appears to have moved away from any reference to the muthos and to be using reasoned argument, but it is not until 324d that Protagoras himself acknowledges that he is beginning to use logos.

and technê are interchangeable as appropriate terms to describe either succeeding in a specific craft or in life as a whole. For Protagoras the professions which Socrates has described as technai are themselves examples of aretê. So, for example, at 322d7 he speaks of aretê tektonikê (excellence in carpentry) whereas Socrates has described such practical expertise only as technê (319c7 – 8).²⁶ At 323a7 – 8, Protagoras refers to practical skill in flute playing and in other activities as 'en tais allais aretais'. Similarly, the ability to live well as a citizen – an ability which Socrates described only as aretê – is, for Protagoras, itself a technê. At 327b, he suggests that no one is reluctant to share their knowledge of justice or the laws, in the same way that they are reluctant with 'tôn allôn technêmatôn' (327b1) – justice is treated as a technê, albeit one which is shared by everyone. At 327c6 - 7, he refers to even the wickedest citizen being a 'craftsman' in the art of justice [dikaion auton kai dêmiourgon toutou tou pragmatos].²⁷ Protagoras' use of technê and aretê as interchangeable terms contrasts with Socrates' careful distinction between the two in his first argument. It serves to emphasise how different his position is from Socrates' own at this stage, and at the same time, to look ahead to the time when Socrates, too, will be forced to abandon the distinction.

Testing Protagoras' claim to technê

Socrates doesn't appear to reply directly to Protagoras' argument. Instead he asks a question about the relationship between the different parts of aretê:

'You said that Zeus bestowed justice and conscience on mankind, and then many times in your discourse you spoke of justice and soundness of mind and holiness and all the rest as all summed up as the one thing, excellence. Will you then explain

²⁶ Adkins (1973, p.6) points out that Protagoras' use of aretê, rather than technê, to refer to excellence in a practical activity such as carpentry is unusual. Technê denotes competence and expertise and this would be, Adkins argues, the more usual way of referring to expertise in a practical skill. He explains (p.11) Protagoras' use of aretê to describe the skill of the carpenter as an attempt to appeal to artisans in his audience (who, he suggests, would see in the application of the term aretê to a craft the suggestion that they too have the excellence which was 'traditionally the prerogative of the wealthier members of society'). Adkins believes Protagoras is speaking 'with the suspicions of a mass audience in mind' (p.10). This interpretation would seem plausible were it not (as Stokes points out, 1986, p.211) that Protagoras isn't speaking to a mass audience. The initial scene in Callias' house has made it clear that it is a select and educated private audience. Instead, it seems more likely that Plato highlights Protagoras' broad interpretation of aretê in order to create a contrast with the restricted sense in which Socrates has used the term.

²⁷ By comparison with those who have been not been brought up in a civilised society. Here, through his use of the word 'dêmiourgikos', Protagoras makes the point that all citizens possess 'expertise' in aretê; it is not the province of a limited few.

precisely whether excellence is one thing, and justice and soundness of mind and holiness parts of it, or whether all of these that I've just mentioned are different names of one and the same thing. This is what I still want to know.' (329c2 – d2, Taylor, 1991)

Protagoras replies (329d3 – 4) that aretê is a single thing and that the other qualities are parts of it. Socrates goes on to question the nature of the relationship between the parts and the whole. He asks whether it is like the relationship between the face and its features, or like the relationship between a piece of gold and its homogeneous parts; Protagoras replies (329d8 – e2) that it is more like the former. Socrates then enquires whether one part of virtue can be present without the others and Protagoras confirms his belief (329e – 330b) that it can, because each of the individual parts of aretê is different from the other, both in itself and in its capacity [dunamis]. This line of questioning would seem, at first, to bear very little relationship to the previous argument about whether excellence as citizen is a technê which can be taught. In fact, there is a direct relationship between the two. For Socrates, one of the distinguishing features of a craftsman is his ability to understand how the relevant parts of his 'product' relate to one another and combine to create an ordered whole. Similarly, a distinguishing feature of the product of a technê is that it is an ordered, structured whole within which the component parts are arranged so as to achieve the effectiveness of the whole. Socrates makes this clear, for example, in the *Gorgias* when he says to Callicles:

'Look for instance if you like at painters, builders, shipwrights, all other craftsmen [dêmiourgous] – whichever one you like; see how each of them arranges in a structure whatever he arranges, and compels one thing to be fitting and suitable to another, until he composes the whole thing arranged in a structure and order. All craftsmen [dêmiourgoi], including those we were talking of just now, gymnastic-trainers, and doctors, form the body into order and structure, don't they. Do we agree that this is so, or not?' (*Gorgias* 503e4 – 504a3, Irwin, 1979)

Socrates sees an essential mark of the true craftsman as the ability to understand the structure and order of the product of his technê, in terms of the relationship of its parts to the whole and to each other. An essential mark of the product of a real technê is that it is characterised by this order. Protagoras is claiming that the ability to live well is a technê of which he has mastery. Socrates challenges him to

demonstrate that this is the case by asking him to demonstrate his understanding of the structure of a good life (the 'product' of living well).

In the arguments which follow, Socrates puts this understanding to the test, by challenging the replies which Protagoras has given regarding the 'order' and 'structure' of a good life. He does so through a series of arguments which examine the relationship between the individual parts of aretê. It is important to remember that the question underpinning all of these arguments continues to be whether aretê is a technê which can be learned and taught. Socrates is testing whether Protagoras can demonstrate that aretê does have a determinate and ordered structure - the hallmark of any technê. Technê continues to be the 'lens' through which Socrates examines the type of wisdom required to live a good life.

1.4 An obscured view?

The validity of each of the arguments through which Socrates challenges Protagoras' understanding of the structure of aretê has been the subject of much discussion. In this section, I will explore why Protagoras is so unhappy with each argument. As a result of his objections, each argument is either abandoned before a conclusion is reached, or the conclusion is effectively forced upon him when he is clearly unhappy with it. In every case, I will suggest, Socrates' and Protagoras' failure to reach agreement on the relationship between the different parts of aretê is due to a failure to define the principal terms which are used within the argument – that is, to define what the terms mean in the context of a good life. Socrates and Protagoras are exploring what kind of ability is needed to achieve a good life (or, more specifically, whether or not this ability is a technê), without referring specifically to the nature of a good life. Their view of the nature of aretê is obscured by the vague and non-specific language with which they are attempting to depict it. I will attempt to demonstrate this by considering each of the arguments in turn:

Justice and Holiness: 330c1 – 332a1

In the first argument, Socrates focuses upon whether justice (dikaiosunê) and holiness (hosiotês) are alike, and argues that they are homoiotaton [331b5]. Protagoras does not accept this, however. He points out that some aspect of resemblance can be found between almost any two things, and claims that this is not sufficient to describe them as alike.

‘Very well then, he said. Justice resembles holiness in a way; since in fact anything resembles anything else in some way or other. There is a respect in which white resembles black, and hard soft, and all the other things that seem completely opposite to each other. We said before that the parts of the face have different powers and are not like one another. Well, in a way each one does resemble and is like the others. So by this line of argument you could prove, if you wanted to, that these too are all similar to one another. But it isn’t right to call things similar [*homoia*] just because they have some point of similarity [*homoion ti*], however small, nor dissimilar if they have some dissimilarity.’ (331d1 – e4, Taylor, 1991)

Protagoras does not explain the circumstance in which he believes we *are* justified in saying that two things are alike. However, we can look to our own use of the term to help us understand what he may be suggesting. When we do call two things alike, we mean that the similarities which we have identified between them are important or relevant within the context of our discussion. So, for example, I say to a friend that my two cousins are very alike. In fact, they are dissimilar in many respects – they look very different and are different ages. However, my friend and I are talking about the personalities of my family members. My cousins have many similarities in their personality (both, for example, have bad tempers) and so I feel justified in saying that they are alike.

I would suggest that Protagoras is making the point that he and Socrates have not identified or agreed what the relevant/important resemblance or similarity is in the context of *aretê*. As a result, they have no justification for describing the different parts of *aretê* as alike. They are relying upon an adjective [*homoios*] which, as Protagoras points out, can be used in an almost unlimited number of contexts (anything is like anything else in some respects). Our use of the word only becomes meaningful and justified when we have agreed which likenesses are relevant in the context of our discussion.

So, Socrates’ argument fails, to the extent that Protagoras remains reluctant to agree that justice and holiness are alike:

[Socrates] ‘I was astonished. Do you really think, I said, that the just and the holy have nothing more than some slight similarity to one another?’

Not exactly, he [Protagoras] said, but then again it isn't as you seem to suppose.'
(331e5 – 332a1, Taylor, 1991)

In objecting to Socrates' use of homoios within his argument, Protagoras introduces a difficulty, which he does not state explicitly at this stage, but which will become explicit later in the dialogue. If their use of the word 'alike' is to be meaningful, they must agree what the word means in the context of their discussion. In other words, they must agree which similarities between justice and holiness are relevant to living a good life. To achieve this, however, they must begin with a shared understanding of what a good life entails and it becomes clear that they do not have this.

Wisdom and Soundness of Mind: 332a2 – 333b6

Socrates goes on to explore whether wisdom (sophia) is the same as soundness of mind (sôphrosunê). This time the basis of his argument is that both of these parts of aretê have the same opposite (aphrosunê) and that they are, therefore, one and the same thing. In the previous argument, Protagoras made the point that the principal adjective (homoios) which they were using to explore the relationship between two parts of aretê, could be used in many different contexts. Since they had not agreed how 'homoios' was to be defined in the context of aretê, Protagoras regarded this line of argument as pointless. I would suggest that Protagoras believes the same difficulty applies to the use of the adjective 'opposite' [enantion] within Socrates' argument from 332a2 – 333b6. The word 'opposite' is usually used to refer to two things which are opposed to each other either in their physical location or in their characteristics. It describes the position of two things at different ends of a scale from one another, whether this scale is one of physical location or of character. For our use of the word to be meaningful, however, it is necessary to have identified what the relevant scale is. If, for example, we are talking about (if our scale is) intensity/shade of colour, then white is the opposite of black. But in other respects, white and black are not opposite; they do have similarities; for example, both are colours and both appear on a chess board and on a zebra.

So, if the term 'opposite' is to be used meaningfully in the context of living a good life, we must first identify what it means within this context. What scale are we using to judge the extent to which two abilities differ from one another in respect of achieving a good life? If Socrates is claiming that two parts of aretê have the same opposite – aphrosunê - then we must be clear on what scale we are judging their opposition.

Protagoras does not state explicitly that the basis of his objection to Socrates' argument is that Socrates is, once again, using an adjective without having defined its meaning in the context of their discussion. We are told only that he agreed 'very reluctantly' [mal'akontôs, 333b4] to the conclusion of the argument that wisdom and soundness of mind have the same opposite; the reason for his reluctance is not stated. However, when Socrates makes the point that they have now established the unity of two pairs of virtues, we are reminded that Protagoras' objection to the basis of the first conclusion (about the unity of justice and holiness) would apply equally well in this case:

'So good sense and wisdom would seem to be one and the same, would they not? And previously, you recall, we saw that justice and holiness were virtually the same.' (333b4 – 6, Taylor, 1991).

Socrates' statement appears, at face value, to be a reminder of their progress so far (as he sees it). However, it also serves to remind us that Protagoras was unhappy with the first conclusion they reached, just as he is now unhappy with the second. In doing so, it leads us to recall *why* Protagoras objected to the first conclusion and to recognise that the very same objection applies here. Both of Socrates' arguments have relied upon terms which have not been adequately defined in the context of living a good life. This implied difficulty becomes explicit in the next argument.

Justice and Soundness of Mind: 333b7 – 333e1

From 333b7, Socrates begins to question Protagoras about the relationship between justice (dikaïosunê) and good sense (sôphrosunê). His strategy is to make Protagoras consider whether to act unjustly can ever, at the same time, be to act with good sense. In doing so, Socrates puts Protagoras in a rather uncomfortable position by forcing him, effectively, to choose between:

(i) accepting that an unjust act can, nevertheless, be an example of good sense because it enables the perpetrator to succeed [eu prattein, 333d7]. By accepting this, Protagoras would support Socrates' argument that each part of aretê is different, but would undermine his moral reputation as a teacher of young citizens. Protagoras clearly feels that in his position, he must be seen to hold and profess strong moral

values. He is ashamed to agree to any conclusions which might suggest that, as a teacher, he would advocate that his pupils should sometimes act unjustly.²⁸

(ii) denying that an unjust act can ever be an example of good sense. Protagoras is aware that, in doing so, he would undermine his claim that he teaches people how to succeed in their public and private lives. He knows that many people believe that individual success is often the result of injustice rather than of justice, and would be sceptical that an education, founded on the principle of acting justly in all situations, will give them (or their children) the best chance of success in life.

So, Protagoras is faced with a dilemma. He reluctantly accepts that on occasion people do act with good sense in acting unjustly, and that they succeed [eu prattousin, 333d7 - 8] as a result of their injustice.

The good and the beneficial (333d9 – 334c6)

At 333d, Socrates introduces the question of what is good for men:

‘Now, I said, are those things good which are beneficial [ôphelima] to men?’ (333d9 – e1, Taylor, 1991)

In raising this question, Socrates is not moving away from the current line of discussion, as might appear to be the case, but clarifying how they define the success [eu pratein] which he and Protagoras have just ‘agreed’ can be the result of injustice. If we describe our lives as successful, this suggests a belief that we have achieved something which is good for ourselves, or for others (or both). So Socrates raises the question of how we measure our success and suggests that by achieving something good, we mean achieving something beneficial.

By asking whether what is good for men is what benefits them, Socrates makes Protagoras’ dilemma worse. Protagoras has admitted that on occasion men succeed as a result of injustice. If he now accepts the resulting benefit to the individual as the criterion by which an action is judged to be good or bad, he must then admit either:

²⁸ [Socrates] ‘Do you think that a man who acts unjustly is sensible in so acting?’

[Protagoras] I should be ashamed to assent to that, Socrates, he said, though many people say so.’ (333b8 – c3, Taylor, 1991)

- (i) that in teaching men to be just he teaches them something which is often of no benefit to them, or;
- (ii) that, in order to benefit his pupils, he teaches them injustice.

At the heart of Protagoras' difficulty with each of Socrates' arguments to establish the unity of aretê is Protagoras' personal conviction that each part of aretê has its own distinguishing characteristics²⁹ and that wisdom on its own cannot be sufficient for a good life. This conviction³⁰ becomes clear in the course of the dialogue up to 334 and is reflected dramatically in Protagoras' becoming increasingly resistant to and annoyed with Socrates' attempts to establish the unity of aretê:

'I could see that Protagoras was annoyed [tetrachunthai] by this time, and that he was ready for a verbal battle [agônian] and keen to get to grips; so when I saw that, I took care to put my questions in a mild manner.' (333e1 – 5, Taylor, 1991).

Protagoras does not entirely reject Socrates' definition of what is good, however, but instead he points out that that 'beneficial' also refers to things which are not good for men, but are good for other things:

'My goodness, yes, he said, and there are things I call good even though they aren't beneficial to men.' (333e1 – 2, Taylor, 1991)

Protagoras then makes the point (at length) that 'beneficial' is an adjective which can be used in many different contexts. It can refer to what is good for plants and animals, as well as to what is good for men. Similarly it can refer to what is good for a particular breed of animal, for a particular part of a plant or for a particular part of the human body. As a result, a huge variety of things can be described as beneficial and the same thing may be beneficial in one context, and harmful in another:

'Not at all. I know of many things which are harmful to men, food and drink and drugs and a thousand other things, and of some which are beneficial. Some things have

²⁹ As Protagoras first states at 329d8 – e2.

³⁰ The strength of this conviction is also demonstrated by the fact that Protagoras cannot bring himself to abandon it even though it would clearly be in his interest to do so. If living well as a good citizen entails far more than the technical knowledge (politikê technê) which he claims to teach (319a3 – 7), then his pupils are probably wasting their money.

neither effect on men, but have an effect on horses; some have no effect except on cattle, or on dogs. Some have no effect on any animal, but do affect trees. And some things are good for the roots of the tree, but bad for the growing parts, for instance manure is good if applied to the roots of all plants, but if you put it on the shoots and young twigs it destroys everything. Oil, too, is very bad for all plants and most destructive of the hair of animals other than man, but in the case of man it is beneficial to the hair and to the rest of the body. So varied and many-sided a thing is goodness, that even here the very same thing is good for the outside of the human body, and very bad for the inside. That is the reason why doctors all forbid sick people to use oil in their food except in the smallest quantities, just enough to cover up any unpleasant smell from the dishes and garnishes.’ (334a3 – c6, Taylor, 1991)

Protagoras’ statement about what is beneficial is often interpreted as a statement of the doctrine that “man is the measure” which is attributed to him in the *Theaetetus*.³¹ A.E. Taylor (1926, p.251) suggests that Protagoras’ argument is that ‘nothing can be pronounced good absolutely and unconditionally.’ He claims that this is ‘a direct and simple application of Protagoras’ own principle of “man the measure” to ethics’. Vlastos (1956, p.xvi, n.32) suggests that this ‘looks like a piece of genuine Protagorean theorizing’. Yet, as C.C.W. Taylor (1991, p.133) points out, there is nothing in this passage of the *Protagoras* which suggests that what is beneficial depends on what any individual believes to be beneficial. As Taylor puts it: ‘The observation that manure is good for roots but bad for leaves neither entails nor follows from the thesis that whatever anyone believes to be good is good (for the person who believes it)’. There is no suggestion in Protagoras’ statement at 334a – c of the doctrine that “man is the measure”. Nor does Protagoras deny that a single account/definition of goodness exists, which applies to all individual instances of goodness.³² C.C.W. Taylor (1991, p.133) makes this point when he says: ‘all the different things which he [Protagoras] cites as good for some kinds of things and not good for others might be good or not in virtue of possessing or lacking one and the

³¹ ‘Man is the measure of all things: of the things which are, that they are, and of the things which are not, that they are not.....as each thing appears to me, so it is for me, and as it appears to you, so it is for you – you and I each being a man?’ (*Theaetetus* 152a2 - 8, Levett [revised Burnyeat] 1990)

³² Moser & Kostas (1996) deny that the passage is a statement of Protagorean relativism and argue that Protagoras accepts the beneficial as ‘a standard that can be applied in reaching moral agreement’ (p.114). In fact, Protagoras does not argue for or against the existence of a single standard for goodness; instead he points out that ‘beneficial’ can only be used meaningfully as a criterion for goodness when it is used within a specific, clearly defined context.

same set of highly general characteristics or one and the same relationship to something...’.

In fact, Protagoras is now stating explicitly the objection to which he has hinted during each of Socrates’ previous arguments for the unity of aretê. Both of these relied upon terms which had not been adequately defined in the context of living a good life and Protagoras makes clear that this is also the case here. Just as in previous arguments Socrates failed to identify how we judge what is alike,³³ and what is opposite³⁴ in the specific context of aretê, here he has failed to identify what ‘beneficial to men’ means in this context.

Protagoras explains that ‘beneficial’ expresses what is good in a particular context; it expresses what is good *for X*. It is a word which is varied (pantodapon – 334b7) and many-sided (poikilon – 334b6) because of the wide range of contexts within which we use it. The range of examples Protagoras gives serves to emphasise the diversity of its application. As a result, we cannot use it meaningfully without reference to a specific, clearly defined context. In other words, we must be precise about to whose benefit we are referring. Even when we have identified whether we are talking about humans, animals or plants we still need to be more specific. With plants for example we must clarify whether we are talking about their roots or their growing parts. Similarly, it is not meaningful to talk without qualification (as Socrates is trying to do) about what is beneficial for men. Instead, we must specify precisely to which aspect of human existence we are referring. Oil, for example, is good for maintaining the condition of human hair and skin, but bad if it forms part of the human diet. We would be mistaken if we simply said that oil was beneficial for men, without clarifying in what respect. Socrates has made this very same mistake in his argument for the unity of justice and good sense. He has referred very generally to what is beneficial ‘to men’, without distinguishing whether he means:

- (i) beneficial in enabling men to live a better life, or
- (ii) beneficial in another aspect of their lives by, for example, making them wealthy or powerful.

³³ In discussing the relationship between justice and holiness: 330c1 – 332a1.

³⁴ In discussing the relationship between wisdom and soundness of mind: 332a2 – 333b6.

As a result, Protagoras implies, Socrates' argument is built on a false foundation. He is attempting to make Protagoras concede that injustice can sometimes benefit men, without clarifying whether it can benefit them *in respect of achieving a good life*.

A number of commentators have suggested that Protagoras' statement simply represents an irrelevant digression, which he uses to sidestep a difficult question. Stokes (1986, p.309) adopts this view and Vlastos (1956, p.xvi, n.32) agrees that Protagoras' reply serves 'only to help the sophist out of a fix in the argument'. In fact, Protagoras' apparent digression is a clear statement of a difficulty which is undermining the foundation of their discussion and of the need to address this if they are to make further progress. In their discussion about the unity of aretê Socrates and Protagoras are failing to refer specifically to what a good life entails. As a result, they are failing to achieve any real progress.

1.5 Establishing the need for a standard

So, Protagoras' apparent digression is, in fact, a direct reply (although admittedly a rather long one) to Socrates' question about the relationship between what is good and what is beneficial. He does not sidestep the question and it is actually Socrates who moves away from the subject of discussion by complaining about the length of Protagoras' replies:

'Protagoras, I happen to be a forgetful sort of person, and if someone speaks to me at length, I forget what he is talking about. It's just as if I were a trifle deaf; in that case you would think it right to speak louder than usual, if you were going to talk to me. So now, since you are dealing with someone with a bad memory, cut your answers short and make them briefer, if I am to follow you.' (334c8 – d5, Taylor, 1991)

Socrates' feigned difficulty in understanding Protagoras' reply reflects a real difficulty in dealing with the criticism that he has raised. Protagoras has made Socrates aware that, throughout their discussion, they have been failing to refer specifically to what living a good life actually entails. They have been talking about the relationship of the different parts of aretê within a good life, without specific reference to what they actually mean by a good life.

Socrates' complaint results in a discussion (334d – 338e) about dialectical procedure. The assembled company try to help Socrates and Protagoras reach agreement about how they will conduct their enquiry and to prevent them from abandoning it. I will suggest that, through this apparent digression from their discussion, Plato actually explores how Socrates can address Protagoras' criticism that he is not referring to what a good life entails and thus offers a way forward for their enquiry into wisdom.

It proves difficult to reach agreement on what length of answer is appropriate, since Protagoras is an advocate of makrologia and wants to be allowed to continue to make long speeches. Socrates, in contrast, advocates brachulogia and believes that they can only make progress if Protagoras' replies are brief and to the point. The first attempts to help them resolve their differences are ineffective. Callias defends Protagoras' right to answer in the way he wants (335c – 336b). Alcibiades, in turn, claims that Socrates' objections to this are justified. At the point where the conversation is about to descend into a quarrel, Critias intervenes (336d – e) and suggests that, rather than taking sides, they should unite in persuading Socrates and Protagoras to continue. At this point (337a) Prodicus enters the conversation and suggests some linguistic distinctions which he feels are relevant to their debate. He distinguishes between:

- Listening impartially [koinoi] and listening without discrimination [isoi];
- Debating [amphisbêtein] and wrangling [eridzein];
- Giving esteem [eudokimein] and giving praise [epainein];
- Gaining enjoyment [euphrainesthai] and gaining pleasure [hêdesthai].

Allen (1996, p.114) in his commentary on this passage, suggests that Prodicus' contribution is 'openly satiric'. He describes how 'Prodicus undertakes to settle a serious disagreement over the form of the discussion with a series of trivial distinctions between largely irrelevant words; he is a pedant and it is idle to plead on his behalf that one man's pedantry is another man's scholarship.' For Allen the purpose of the digression is, essentially, 'to break the tension of the dialogue' and this parody of Prodicus helps to achieve this. Allen fails to acknowledge, however, that Prodicus' contribution is, in fact, the foundation upon which a resolution to the problem is built. Prodicus clarifies the standard which the conversation must achieve.

His semantic distinctions are underpinned by the question: 'what would the best conversation [kallistê sunousia] be like?'.³⁵ He concludes that it would be one where:

- (i) the audience listen impartially (koinoi) but with discrimination (mê isoi), 337a2 – 6;
- (ii) the speakers argue (amphisbêtein) but do not quarrel (eridzein), 337a6 – b3;
- (iii) the speakers earn esteem (eudokimein) but not praise (epaineisthai), 337b4 – 7;
- (iv) the audience gain enjoyment (euphrainesthai) but not pleasure (hêdesthai), 337c1 – 4.

Prodicus establishes a clear standard for a kallistê sunousia based on a clearly defined set of criteria.³⁶ In doing so, he puts the sophists in a better position to determine what length of answer is appropriate, because they have now a clearly defined standard to refer to in reaching a decision. This becomes apparent when Hippias suggests a solution, based directly upon the standard Prodicus has proposed. He proposes that Socrates and Protagoras should both pursue a middle course [meson ti, 338a6 – 7] and should aim to achieve a moderate length [to metrion mêkos, 338b1] in their answers. For Socrates this will entail avoiding excessive brevity, and for Protagoras, avoiding excessive verbosity. Hippias suggests that pursuing a middle course will enable the assembled company to achieve a constructive discussion which:

- does not descend into a quarrel;³⁷
- is not unworthy of their reputation;³⁸
- has dignity and elegance.³⁹

In justifying this model of dialectic, Hippias takes careful account of Prodicus' criteria for a kallistê sunousia, and the model is clearly founded upon the standard which Prodicus has proposed. This counts against Allen's claim that Prodicus' contribution

³⁵ He refers to this standard at 337b3.

³⁶ However tenuous the semantic distinctions he makes they are, nevertheless, detailed and precise, thus forming the basis for a precise set of criteria.

³⁷ Hippias is concerned that they should not wrangle [diapheresthai] amongst themselves 'like the most worthless of men' (337e1 – 2, Taylor, 1991). In doing so he takes account of Prodicus' second criterion - that the participants should debate but not quarrel.

³⁸ Prodicus' third criterion for the discussion was that both speakers should be held in esteem by their listeners. Hippias acknowledges this criterion when he expresses the fear that, by wrangling amongst themselves, they will appear unworthy of their good reputation [mêden toutou tou axiômatos axion apophênasthai, 337d7 – e1].

³⁹ 'megaloprepresteroi' and 'euschêmonesteroi' (338a4). Here, Hippias takes account of Prodicus' fourth criterion - that the conversation should give enjoyment to its listeners.

is trivial and irrelevant. In fact, Prodicus enables them to establish a practical way forward, by laying the foundation upon which Hippias builds.

Allen describes Hippias' contribution as 'wholly impractical'.⁴⁰ In doing so, he disregards the fact that the assembled company do accept Hippias' proposal and encourage Socrates and Protagoras to do the same. So, whether or not his proposal is practical, Hippias does make a positive contribution to enabling the argument to move forward.

Furthermore, I would suggest that it is highly significant that the solution to the immediate question (about dialectic) – the proposal of a standard of measurement – has strong similarities to the conclusion that will be reached to the dialogue's central question – that aretê is an art of measurement. By demonstrating that the agreement of a standard for dialectic (a standard for a kallistê sounousia) has achieved a firm basis upon which to continue their discussion, Plato hints to us through this apparent digression about dialectic that there is a more fundamental need for Socrates and Protagoras to establish a clear standard for a life which is kallistê.⁴¹ Otherwise, Socrates will be unable to address Protagoras' criticism that their conversation is failing to refer to what a good life entails.

1.6 Beginning the search for a standard

At 349d Socrates and Protagoras finally resume their discussion about the relationship between the different parts of aretê. Protagoras concedes (349d2 – 9) that they have established that wisdom, good sense, justice and holiness are fairly similar to each other, but maintains that courage is totally different. It is, perhaps, surprising that Protagoras is prepared to concede as much as he does (since he objected to the validity of each of Socrates' arguments which 'established' the similarity which Socrates now claims they have agreed upon). However, Protagoras is perhaps just reluctant to go back over old ground, and prefers to move forward

⁴⁰ According to Allen (1996, p.115), 'Hippias, a noted polymath whom Plato delighted in portraying as obtuse, uses an abstract theory whose meaning is dubious – the contrast between nature and convention – to recommend a suggestion which is wholly impractical and seasons his wit with an atrocious concoction of metaphors'.

⁴¹ Prodicus' use of the term kallistê to describe excellence in philosophical conversation reminds us that this is same the value which Socrates, from the outset, has used to describe excellence in life. In the opening frame we are told that he regarded Protagoras as kalliôn than Alcibiades because of his wisdom. At the same time we are reminded by Prodicus' careful semantic distinctions that Socrates and Protagoras do not have any definition of a life which is kalon, let alone one as precise as Prodicus has proposed for their sounousia.

with a new subject of discussion – the relationship of courage to the other parts of aretê. He suggests that courage is totally different from the rest of aretê:

‘And this is how you will know that what I say is true: you will find many men who are totally unjust and irreligious and wanton and ignorant, but most outstandingly courageous.’ (349d5 – 9, Taylor, 1991)

Socrates argues against this claim. Taylor (1991, p.150) summarises his argument as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 349e2 | 1. The courageous are daring. |
| 349e3 – 8 | 2. Every part of excellence is something fine. |
| 349e8 – 350b1 | 3. Knowledgeable men are more daring than those who lack knowledge. |
| 350b1- 6 | 4. Those who are daring but lacking in knowledge are mad, which is a shameful state. |
| | 5. Hence, the state of being daring but lacking in knowledge is not a part of excellence (by 2 and 4). |
| 350b4 – 5, c1 - 2 | 6. Hence, those who are daring but lacking in knowledge are not courageous (since courage is admitted to be a part of excellence) (by 5). |
| 350c2 - 4 | 7. Those who are wisest are most daring (by 3), and hence most courageous (by ?). |
| 350c4 – 5 | 8. Therefore, courage is wisdom (by ?). |

Protagoras criticises the logic of Socrates’ argument. He says that Socrates only asked him if to be daring (more specifically, to have the kind of daring that is founded upon knowledge)⁴² is a necessary condition of being courageous. In other words, he admitted only that anyone who is courageous must, necessarily, be daring:

‘You are not correctly recalling, he said, what I said in answer to your question, Socrates. You asked me if the courageous are daring and I agreed that they are.’ (350c6 – 8, Taylor, 1991)

⁴² As opposed to the kind of daring which is founded upon ignorance. Protagoras agrees that this kind of daring is a form of madness and cannot be part of aretê.

Protagoras objects, however, that he did not admit that to be daring is a sufficient condition of being courageous. In other words, he did not agree that anyone who is daring will, by being daring, also be courageous:

‘but you didn’t ask me if, in addition, the daring are courageous – for if you had asked me that, I should have said that not all are.’ (350c8 – d1, Taylor, 1991)

He claims (350e – 351a) that Socrates is muddling the relationship between being courageous and being daring in the same way that one might muddle the relationship between strength [ischus] and capability [dunatos]. Capability is a necessary condition for strength and so everyone who is strong must, necessarily, be capable. However, capability is not a sufficient condition for strength, and it would be false to say that everyone who is capable must, by being capable, also be strong. Protagoras explains that this is because capability is not the essence of strength; instead its essence is ‘a good natural condition and nurture of the body’.

It is this same mistake which, Protagoras suggests, Socrates has made in the case of courage. Being daring is not the essence of courage; instead its essence is ‘a good natural condition and nurture of the soul’. Knowledge (and the daring it brings) is necessary for courage, but it is not what courage is all about. Protagoras believes that there is more to courage than wisdom and that Socrates has failed to recognise this.

Interpretation of Socrates’ argument from 349e – 350c has focused on two main issues:

- the precise nature of the fallacy (if any) it contains and the extent to which Protagoras correctly diagnoses this;⁴³
- the extent to which any fallacy in the argument is deliberate on Socrates’/Plato’s part.⁴⁴

The real basis of Socrates’ and Protagoras’ problem, however, is not so much the logic of their argument, but rather that they do not have any shared basis for

⁴³ This question is discussed by Vlastos (1956, pp. xxxi – xxxvi), Klosko (1979, pp.136 – 141), Taylor (1991, pp.150 – 161).

⁴⁴ Klosko (1979) suggests that the argument contains one of several deliberate fallacies used by Socrates in the *Protagoras* to expose Protagoras’ weakness at philosophical argument.

resolving their differences over the logic of the argument. Their argument is founded upon the agreement (stage 2 above) that every part of aretê is kalon, but it turns out that they both mean rather different things by kalon. For Socrates a life which is kalon is nothing other than a life in which one acts with wisdom and it is on this basis, I would suggest, that he feels justified in making the conversion (stage 7 above) from:

- those who are most daring are wisest, to
- those who are wisest are the most courageous.

This conversion is based upon their agreement that a life which is courageous will be kalon and upon Socrates' personal understanding of what kalon means. For Protagoras, however, a life which is kalon involves something more than acting with wisdom. So, for him, Socrates is not justified, on the basis of their agreement that all aretê is kalon, in making the conversion described above. Once more, Socrates and Protagoras are talking in many-sided terms but are lacking a standard for a good life to which they can refer in their discussion. The difficulty which has beset them throughout their conversation has raised its head once again. This time, it is the term kalon which is proving poikilon and pantodapon. This time, however, Socrates is aware of the difficulty and understands how they must address it. In his interpretation of Simonides' poem, he has acknowledged his awareness of their need for a standard for a good life to which they can refer in their discussion. Otherwise, the truth of their arguments will be impossible to establish. So, at this point in the dialogue Socrates begins the search for this standard. He asks:

'And do you maintain, Protagoras, I said, that some men live well and others badly?' (351b3 – 4, Taylor, 1991)

Socrates then asks Protagoras whether to live well is to live pleasantly and whether to live pleasantly is good. Protagoras replies that it depends on whether one takes pleasure in fine (kalois) things.

Socrates' question at 351b about the nature of living well is often regarded as a rather abrupt change of tack and as a recognition that the argument about courage has reached a dead end.⁴⁵ In fact, the question is not at all a change of tack, but a

⁴⁵ Hubbard and Karnofsky (1982, p.140) ask why Plato 'has made Socrates put forward an argument which is easily rebutted and never mentioned again.' They suggest a number of possible answers to this question, of which the last

direct attempt to continue and resolve this question by establishing the standard for a good life upon which its resolution depends.

1.7 Conclusion

Later in the dialogue Socrates will suggest that pleasure is the standard by which a good life should be judged. Having established this standard with Protagoras and the other sophists, he will build upon it a model of knowledge as the art of measuring pleasure in our lives – the metrêtikê technê. Many commentators have denied that Plato/Socrates is serious either in proposing hedonism as a standard for our lives, or about the model of knowledge he constructs upon this standard. They suggest that the metrêtikê technê is an ad hominem device, designed only to respond to specific arguments raised by Protagoras and the many and to defend the truth of the Socratic principle that knowledge is sufficient for aretê. At the most it is only a ‘placeholder’, intended to provide a temporary fix until Socrates can come up with something better.

In portraying the metrêtikê technê as a placeholder, or an ad hominem strategy, commentators overlook the direct relationship between the first and second parts of the dialogue. The first part of the dialogue makes clear that Socrates believes that the safety and well-being of the soul depends upon identifying what type of wisdom will enable us to live a good life. It presents the ‘technê question’ (Is the wisdom we need to live a good life a technê?) as central to discovering the type of knowledge we need, and suggests that this question can only be settled when we have established a clear standard for a good life. The second part of the dialogue provides a direct response to these issues and, in doing so, it requires us to take the metrêtikê technê seriously. It is not just a response to particular arguments which Protagoras or the many have put forward against the sufficiency of knowledge, but to a question which Socrates raised at the very outset of the dialogue and about which he made clear he was entirely serious. The sketch of wisdom which we encounter in the second part of

is that: ‘This is the beginning of a process of elimination: having excluded the possibility that andreia is sophia in the sense that it involves simply having expert knowledge, Socrates is left with the second alternative to pursue’. The ‘second alternative’ to which they refer is that wisdom is ‘a broader understanding of ends – the ability to form rational long-term plans’ (p.136). Hubbard and Karnofsky suggest that Socrates’ abandonment of this line of argument enables him to move the discussion from focusing on one type of knowledge to another. I would suggest, however, that Socrates does not abandon the argument, but continues to try and resolve it, by seeking to establish a standard for a good (kalon) life to which they can refer in their argument.

the dialogue is one which Socrates commissioned and which is carried out entirely to his specification.

In the next chapter I will explore the development of this sketch, and will focus upon how the metrêtikê technê earns its description as the 'salvation of our lives'. I will suggest that it does so by offering an account of our motivation to live a good life and a determinate basis for making the right decisions in our lives. In doing so, it captures the two essential characteristics of a model of knowledge which would be sufficient for aretê.

Sketching the ‘Sôtêria Tou Biou’

Plato and the Art of Measurement

Chapter 2 – Creating the Sketch

(*Protagoras* 351b – 357e)

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I argued that in the *Protagoras*, up to 351b, Socrates plans and prepares for a sketch of the type of knowledge which would, on its own, be sufficient for a good life. In doing so, he identifies two essential features which must be part of the sketch. Firstly, it must show whether the type of wisdom required for such a life is essentially technical or non-technical. Secondly, it must show what standard we must achieve in our lives through wisdom in order to preserve the safety of the soul. The sketch must be convincing enough to overcome Protagoras’ personal conviction that each part of aretê has its own distinguishing characteristics and that wisdom on its own cannot be sufficient for a good life.¹ In this chapter I will explore how, from 351b, Socrates creates the sketch which he has been planning up to this point in the dialogue.

What standard must we achieve in our lives through wisdom?

I will start by suggesting in section two that, through the medical analogy which Socrates uses at 352a1 – b3, he indicates that pleasure will have a central role within the sketch and that the role of pleasure within a good life should now be the focus of their enquiry. The medical analogy (which has received relatively little attention from commentators) is, therefore, programmatic in establishing the course of the discussion from 352.

¹ In chapter one I showed how this conviction becomes clear in the course of the dialogue up to 351b and is reflected dramatically in Protagoras’ becoming increasingly resistant to and annoyed with Socrates’ attempts to establish the unity of aretê. Furthermore, Protagoras cannot bring himself to abandon his conviction even though it would clearly be in his interest to do so. If living well as a good citizen entails far more than the technical knowledge (politikê technê) which he claims to teach (319a3 – 7), then his pupils are probably wasting their money.

From 352b, Socrates pursues the line of enquiry which he has advocated through the medical analogy. He does so by instigating a conversation with the many and exploring their view of pleasure. In section three I show how, through this conversation, Socrates leads the many not only to acknowledge their belief that a good life is one in which pleasure is maximised, but also to accept that everything they do is motivated by the pursuit of pleasure.² Having gained the agreement of the many to this view of a good life,³ Socrates draws the conclusion at 357c6 – d6 that this view entails that knowledge will be sufficient for a good life and that ignorance is the only possible explanation for wrongdoing.

In section four, I discuss the argument by which Socrates reaches this conclusion, and explore the widely differing views of commentators on precisely how he derives it from the opinion of the many (and on whether his conclusion is sound in the light of what the many have agreed to). I conclude that there is a direct and sound relationship between the many's consistent motivation to pursue pleasure as something good and Socrates' conclusion that ignorance is the only possible explanation for their wrongdoing. With this conclusion reached, one feature of Socrates' sketch is in place; he has portrayed a good life - with the maximisation of pleasure as its standard - for which, if we accept his argument, knowledge is sufficient.

An illustration of wisdom as a technê

At 357d6 -7 he confirms that the type of wisdom which is sufficient to achieve such a life is a technê – more specifically, it is the technê of measuring pleasure. In doing so, he draws in the second feature of his sketch. In section five I explore how the need for such a technê derives from the rather complex version of hedonism which Socrates has attributed to the many - according to which pleasure can be judged only in terms of quantity and in which, furthermore, the quantity of pleasure arising from our actions can only be judged over a lifetime.

² In 2.3, I discuss the disagreement amongst commentators as to whether the many acknowledge that they are psychologically driven to pursue pleasure in their lives. I support the view that there is limited textual evidence that they are psychologically compelled to pursue pleasure, but suggest that there is strong evidence that they are consistently motivated to pursue it. Their motivation is consistent in the sense that: (i) it is *only* pleasure (or avoidance of pain) which they are motivated to pursue as a goal in their actions and (ii) they are *always* active in pursuit of this goal.

³ The many present a very different view initially, suggesting that some pleasures are bad and (along with other bad influences such as pain, fear and lust) cause them to act against their knowledge of what it is best to do (352b2 – c2).

A convincing sketch?

There remains, however, the task of gaining Protagoras' commitment (and the reader's) to this sketch of aretê. In the next chapter I will suggest that Socrates attempts to do this from 359a ff. by resuming the argument (which he abandoned at 351b) to establish the unity of courage and wisdom and introducing the metrêtikê technê within this argument.

Many commentators,⁴ however, have suggested that Socrates' sketch of aretê has not even convinced himself. They argue that he does not take the metrêtikê technê seriously and that his attempts to convince Protagoras are only ad hominem. In section six I argue that Socrates does demonstrate that he is entirely serious about the metrêtikê technê. He does so by emphasising its strengths⁵ and making clear that the metrêtikê technê can provide:

- a determinate standard for a good life;
- a practical means of making accurate judgements, founded upon a objective truth about how we should live;
- an account of our motivation to act upon and follow these judgements.

At the same time, Socrates does recognise that the metrêtikê technê is only a sketch and that there is much work to be done before it can be regarded as a full illustration of the type of wisdom which is sufficient for aretê. I argue that Socrates' statement at 357b4 – c1 (which has caused commentators considerable difficulty) should be interpreted as his acknowledgement that there is more work to do and detail to fill in, before this sketch can be regarded as a full and accurate illustration.

2.2 Establishing a role for pleasure: medical analogy (352a1 – b3)

In the previous chapter I discussed how, in the dialogue up to 352a, Socrates has highlighted a dilemma for Protagoras. He has done so by examining Protagoras' claim that aretê is a technê which can be taught, and exploring the full implications of this claim. If aretê is nothing more than a technê, then all its so-called 'parts'

⁴ This view is adopted by, for example, Sullivan (1961), Zeyl (1980) and Stokes (1986).

⁵ That is, strengths in relation to its sufficiency for aretê.

(courage, holiness, sôphrosunê, justice and wisdom) must, in fact, be homogeneous and amount to one and the same technê. Protagoras resists each of Socrates' arguments to establish the unity of the different parts of aretê. The problem comes to a head when Socrates attempts to establish the unity of courage and wisdom. Protagoras cannot bring himself to admit that courage can be reduced to knowledge (even though doing so would actually support his claim that aretê, as a technê, is teachable, and that he can teach it). At 351b, Socrates appears to abandon his attempts to convince an increasingly irritable Protagoras that the different parts of aretê amount to one and the same thing. Instead, he asks Protagoras a seemingly unrelated question about the role of pleasure in a good life:

'And do you maintain, Protagoras, I said, that some men live well and others badly?

[Protagoras] I do.

Well, now, do you think a man would live well if he lived in misery and suffering?

[Protagoras] No.

And what if he had a pleasant life to the end? Don't you think that he would have lived well like that?

[Protagoras] Yes, I do.

So to have a pleasant life is good, and to have an unpleasant life bad?

[Protagoras] Provided one takes pleasure in praiseworthy things.' (351b3 – c2, Taylor, 1991)

So, why does Socrates introduce pleasure into their argument at this stage? How does the introduction of a question about pleasure's role in a good life help to resolve Protagoras' dilemma? At 352a1 – b3 Socrates uses a medical analogy which, I will suggest, explains how pleasure is directly relevant to the issue they have been discussing. I will argue that the analogy is programmatic in establishing that pleasure will play a central part within a sketch of a type of wisdom which is sufficient for aretê and that the role of pleasure within a good life should, therefore, be the focus of the discussion from this point:

'Well, then, I said, perhaps things might become clear if we go about it like this.

Imagine someone looking at a man and trying to assess his health or some other bodily function from his appearance, and saying, once he had seen his face and hands, "Come now, uncover your chest and back and let me see them, so that I can *confirm my examination*." I too want something of the sort as regards our question. I've seen that your view about the good and the pleasant is as you say, and now I

want to say something like this: “Come now, Protagoras, uncover for me this part of your mind as well; how do you stand as regards knowledge? Do you agree with the majority there too, or do you think otherwise?” ’ (352a1 – b3, Taylor, 1991 *amended*)

The context and structure of the analogy

This analogy is usually described as a medical analogy. Socrates says that his initial question about the relationship between pleasure and goodness in life corresponds to an examination (presumably by a doctor, although the text doesn’t state this) of the face and hands, before examining the rest of the body. The analogy does not specifically refer to examination by a doctor and Socrates suggests that the examination may not always be concerned with the health of its subject but with ‘some other bodily function’ (352a3). However, ‘episkepsômai’ (352a5) is, as Adam and Adam (1905, p.178) point out, often used by Plato to describe a medical inspection and this seems the most reasonable interpretation of the analogy.

Socrates compares the examination (skepsin – 352a6) of Protagoras’ views to an examination of a man’s health or ‘some other bodily function’. The translation of ‘tôn tou sômatos ergôn’ (352a3) as ‘bodily function’ by most commentators does not make very clear what is meant by this phrase. Adam and Adam (1905, p.178) suggest that different kinds of bodily labour would be examples of ‘sômatos erga’. The general picture painted by the analogy appears to be an examination of the state of the patient’s body either to assess their general health or their fitness for a variety of activities. The basis of comparison within the analogy is thus between:

- an examination of the state/condition of a body, and
- an examination of the state/condition of Protagoras’ opinions.

Socrates describes how the first stage of the examination of a body is to look at the face and hands. Following this initial examination, there is a further examination of the patient’s back and chest. Socrates then compares an examination of the body with his own examination of Protagoras’ opinion on aretê. He explains that, having asked initially about the good and pleasant, he now wants to examine Protagoras’ views on the sufficiency of knowledge for aretê. Socrates’ instruction to Protagoras at 352a8 – b1 to ‘uncover’ his views on knowledge indicates that he is drawing a direct

parallel with the examination of a body which he has just described, where the patient is asked to uncover his chest and back. So, we are justified in linking:

- the examination of the face and hands by a doctor with Socrates' examination of Protagoras' views on pleasure;
- the examination of the chest and back by a doctor with Socrates' examination of Protagoras' views on the sufficiency of knowledge for aretê.

The analogy, therefore, offers a description (at the point in the dialogue where the discussion of pleasure is first introduced) of the relationship between the discussion of pleasure and the dialogue's predominant theme of wisdom. So, the analogy is important in its potential to throw some light upon the role of pleasure within Plato's examination of wisdom in the *Protagoras*.

Interpretations of the analogy

Taylor (1991, p.171) suggests that: 'The medical analogy makes it clear that the question of the relation between pleasure and goodness (corresponding to the inspection of the face and hands) is subsidiary to the question of the relation between courage and knowledge (corresponding to the complete physical examination).'

Taylor sees the analogy as a statement that the discussion of pleasure, on its own, will provide only a limited understanding of a more fundamental question about the relationship between knowledge and aretê.

Stokes (1986, p.371) generally supports this interpretation. He suggests that: 'Knowledge is much more important than pleasure in the dialogue as a whole. If either were an interloper here it would be pleasure. Taylor⁶ has well pointed out that Plato's Socrates regards the issue of pleasure as in a sense subordinate to that of the status of knowledge. There is sufficient indication of this in Socrates' medical simile here (352a – b).'

However, Stokes does concede that the relationship between knowledge and pleasure in life is a theme of continued interest to Plato and one which forms an integral part of his discussion of knowledge.

Taylor's and Stokes' interpretation of the analogy could be supported by the language Socrates uses. In particular, he describes the examination of the chest and

⁶ Refers to Taylor (1976).

back as enabling the doctor to examine the patient 'saphesteron' (352a5). Most translations of the *Protagoras* interpret 'saphesteron' as meaning 'more thoroughly'. Thus Jowett (1953) translates 'hina episkepsômai saphesteron' (352a5 – 6) as 'I want to make a more searching examination' and Ostwald (1956) as 'that I may have a better view'. Hubbard and Karnofsky (1982) translate it as 'so that I can examine you more thoroughly'. These translations could lead us to assume that, since the examination of Protagoras' views on knowledge represents the more thorough examination, the examination of his views on pleasure is merely superficial and insignificant.

However, 'saphes' can also be translated as 'clear' or 'certain'. If it is read in this way here, it puts a different emphasis upon the second part of the examination. The examination of the chest and back provides a clearer or more certain view of symptoms which have already been indicated by looking at the face and hands. Similarly, examination of Protagoras' views on knowledge provides confirmation or clarification of a truth which has already been indicated by his views on pleasure. I am suggesting that this is the more likely interpretation of 'saphes' and have, therefore, amended Taylor's translation of 'hina episkepsômai saphesteron' to read: 'so that I can confirm my examination'.

If this interpretation is correct, Plato may be using the medical analogy to make a stronger statement about his introduction of pleasure into the conversation at this stage - that it is the basis for an understanding of aretê. Rather than being secondary in importance to understanding the relationship between knowledge and aretê, it is an integral part of understanding this relationship. This interpretation of the analogy is supported by the context of ancient medicine.

The context of ancient medicine

The examination of the face and hands referred to by Socrates in the medical analogy at 352a1 – b3 is taken by Taylor and Stokes to represent an examination which is secondary in importance to the examination of the rest of the body. This reflects the reality of modern medicine, where examination of the patient's external appearance is, at the most, a starting point for a more thorough examination and investigation of the patient's health using the range of tools and techniques available.

However, in ancient medicine, and particularly within the Hippocratic School, the emphasis was often more upon a prognosis of the patient's health, rather than upon a diagnosis of their illness. Jones (1923), in an introduction to his translation of the *Prognostic* (pp. ix – xiii), suggests that this was in part due to a need, in the absence of recognised medical qualifications, for doctors to demonstrate that their professed skill was genuine. An accurate prognosis of the course of their patient's illness provided a basis for doing this. Jones also suggests that the emphasis on prognosis was, in part, due to the limited range of treatments available. In the absence of a wide range of treatments, it was less useful to diagnose a wide range of diseases. Instead, it was of more value to predict the course of a patient's illness and to support recovery or assuage pain as far as possible at each stage.

Within the science of prognosis, as described in the *Prognostic*, the first stage was to use certain visible aspects of the patient's condition as the basis for a general understanding of their state of health and, in particular, of whether the condition was fatal. The face was the starting point for this approach:

'In acute diseases the physician must conduct his inquiries in the following way. First he must examine the face of the patient and see whether it is like the faces of healthy people and especially whether it is like its usual self. Such likeness will be the best sign, and the greatest unlikeness will be the most dangerous sign. The latter will be as follows. Nose sharp, eyes hollow, temples sunken, ears cold and contracted with their lobes turned outwards, the skin about the face hard and tense and parched, the colour of the face as a whole being yellow or black.' (*Prognostic* II, 1 – 11, Jones, 1923)

The initial stage of prognosis also took account of the posture of the patient and the position and movements of their limbs:

'As to the motions of the arms, I observe the following facts. In acute fevers, pneumonia, phrenitis and headache, if they move before the face, hunt in the empty air, pluck nap from the bedclothes, pick up bits and snatch chaff from the walls – all these signs are bad, in fact deadly.' (*Prognostic* IV, 1 – 7, Jones, 1923)

The temperature of the patient's head, hands and feet was also important in prognosis:

'For the head, hands, and feet to be cold is a bad sign if the belly and sides be warm; but it is a very good sign when the whole body is evenly warm and soft. ' (*Prognostic* IX, 1 – 4, Jones, 1923)

Socrates' choice of the face (prosôpon) and hands (cheiras akras) at 352a3 – 4, to represent the initial stages of examination, broadly reflects the first stage of the medical examination recommended in *Prognostic*. So, the kind of external examination of the face and hands which Socrates refers to in the medical analogy at 352a and which he equates with an examination of pleasure was of importance in Greek medicine. External symptoms provided a reflection of the patient's general state of health and guided the doctor as to what further examination was required. Rather than being unimportant, they are the external (visible) reflection of the true state of the patient's health and thus lead us towards the truth about the future course of their illness.

The second stage of prognosis, as described by the *Prognostic*, entailed further examination of symptoms and provided the doctor with confirmation of the likely course of the illness. Since chest complaints, pneumonia and pleurisy were some of the main diseases in Hippocrates' time, examination of the chest (to monitor breathing, for example) was an important aspect of this examination.⁷ This second stage of examination is represented within Socrates' medical analogy and compared directly with his request to examine Protagoras' views on the sufficiency of knowledge of aretê.

So, the stages represented in Socrates' medical analogy broadly mirror one description (in the *Prognostic*) of the stages of prognosis in ancient medicine. If the *Prognostic* is, as has been suggested, attributed to a late-fifth or early-fourth century authorship the ideas it contains are likely to have been familiar to Plato's generation. Socrates' reference to Hippocrates at 311b5 demonstrates Plato's assumption that he was a familiar figure to his readers. Thus it seems reasonable to interpret the analogy within the context of Hippocratic medicine. The description of their investigation as 'ten skepsin' (352a6) reflects the language of the *Prognostic* and of

⁷For example, Hippocrates suggests that:

'Rapid respiration indicates pain or inflammation in the parts above the diaphragm. Deep and slow respiration indicates delirium. Cold breath from the nostril and mouth is a very fatal sign. Indeed. Good respiration must be considered to have a very great influence on recovery in all the acute diseases that are accompanied by fever and reach a crisis in forty days.' (*Prognostic* V, 1 - 9, Jones 1923)

fifth/fourth century medical practice generally.⁸ This puts a rather different interpretation on Socrates' equation of his examination of Protagoras' views on pleasure with an examination of the face and hands. Against the context of Hippocratic medicine, the medical analogy can be read as a statement that the examination of the role of pleasure in a good life which Socrates has just instigated will be essential in guiding and informing their examination of the role of knowledge within a good life – just as examination of the face and external limbs would guide the rest of the medical examination towards a sound conclusion and an accurate prognosis. Having made this point through the medical analogy, Socrates sets out to gain an understanding of the role of pleasure within a good life by introducing and exploring the opinion of the many.

2.3 The Opinion of the Many

At 353a, Socrates asks Protagoras to clarify, once again, the relationship between wisdom and living a good life. This time, however, he puts the question within the context of popular opinion. He asks Protagoras whether he believes wisdom is sufficient for a good life or whether he agrees with the opinion of the many that it is a slave to other emotions:

'Do you agree with the majority there too, or do you think otherwise? The opinion of the majority about knowledge is that it is not anything strong, which controls and rules; they don't look at it that way at all, but think that often a man who possesses knowledge is ruled not by it but by something else, in one case passion, in another pleasure, in another pain, sometimes lust, very often fear; they just look at knowledge as a slave who gets dragged about by all the rest. Now are you of a similar opinion about knowledge, or do you think that it is something fine and such as to rule man, and that if someone knows what is good and bad, he would never be conquered by anything so as to do other than what knowledge bids him? In fact, that intelligence is a sufficient safeguard for man?' (352b2 – c7, Taylor, 1991)

Protagoras responds by rejecting popular opinion:

⁸ At *Prognostic* II,1, for example, it is stated that:

'In acute diseases the physician must conduct his inquiries (*skeptesthai*) in the following way.' (Jones, 1923)

'My opinion is indeed as you say, Socrates, he replied, and moreover it would be an especial disgrace to me of all people not to maintain that wisdom and knowledge is the mightiest of human things.' (352c9 – d2, Taylor, 1991)

Here, Protagoras asserts that wisdom is sufficient for a good life, but Socrates' question has reminded him of the dilemma he is in. Protagoras' has argued from the outset that there is more to aretê than wisdom alone,⁹ but as a teacher of aretê, he now acknowledges that it is 'disgraceful' for him to admit this. He might as well admit that his pupils are wasting their money or, at the very least, that he can only partly fulfill his claim to turn them into good citizens. Socrates explains that the view of the many that knowledge is insufficient for a good life (a view which we know is not nearly as far from Protagoras' own as he has just claimed) is underpinned by the belief that wrongdoing is the result of being overcome by pleasure or pain:

'Now do you know that the majority of people don't agree with us, but hold that many people who know what is best to do are not willing to do it, though it is in their power, but do something else. And those whom I've asked about the cause of this say that people who act in that way do so because they are overcome by pleasure or pain or under the influence of one of the things I mentioned just now.

[Protagoras] Yes, Socrates, he said, people have many other wrong ideas too.

[Socrates] Join me, then, in trying to win them over and to teach them the real nature of the experience that they call being overcome by pleasure and for that reason failing to do what is best, when one knows what it is. For perhaps if we told them that they are wrong and mistaken they would ask, "Well, if this experience isn't being overcome by pleasure, what is it then? What do you call it? Tell us." ' (352d4 – 353a6, Taylor, 1991)

In introducing this popular view about the influence of pleasure on a good life, Socrates begins to pursue the line of enquiry which he advocated through the medical analogy at 352a1 – b3. Through this analogy he suggested that achieving an understanding of the true role of pleasure in a good life would offer a way of achieving their ultimate objective – a sketch of the type of wisdom which would be sufficient for a good life. Protagoras, however, fails to recognise the point of Socrates' line of enquiry, and asks why they should be interested in popular opinion.

⁹ He feels particularly strongly that courage is completely different [panu polu diapheron, 349d4 – 5] from any other aspect of aretê. He claims that this is demonstrated by the fact that one can have courage while lacking all the virtues (349d6 – 8).

‘But why, Socrates, must we examine the opinion of the mass of people, who say whatever comes into their heads?’ (353a7 – 8, Taylor, 1991)

In replying to Protagoras’ question, Socrates suggests that an exploration of popular opinion is the basis for resolving the differences of opinion which have beset their enquiry up to this point, and which resulted in the abandonment of the argument about courage:

‘I think, I replied, that this is relevant to our question of how courage is related to the other parts of excellence. So, if you are willing to abide by what we just agreed, that I should conduct the discussion in the way that I think best suited to make the matter clear, please follow my lead. But if not, if you had rather, I’ll let the matter go.’ (353b1 – 5, Taylor, 1991)

Socrates doesn’t appear to justify his claim that that an exploration of popular opinion may be the answer to all their problems. We might question why, after an initial protest, Protagoras gives in so readily¹⁰ and goes along with this line of questioning when all Socrates appears to have said is “trust me, because I think this might be useful and I’m in charge”. In fact, Socrates has already paved the way for this line of argument through the medical analogy. Here he suggested through this analogy that establishing the truth about the role of pleasure in a good life is the basis for achieving the ultimate object of their enquiry - the truth about the role of wisdom in a good life.

If Socrates’ statement at 353b1 – 5 is to be dramatically convincing as a justification (to a very reluctant Protagoras) for going ahead with an exploration of the opinion of the many about pleasure, then we must understand it as referring to and reminding Protagoras of the point which Socrates first made through the medical analogy. When we read Socrates’ reply to Protagoras’ objection in the light of this analogy, we can understand the basis of his claim that the opinion of the many is directly relevant to their enquiry. The opinion of the many is about the role of pleasure in a good life, and the medical analogy has already indicated that establishing the truth about the role of pleasure within a good life is fundamental to achieving the object of their enquiry.

¹⁰ ‘You’re quite right, he said. Go on as you’ve begun.’ (353b6, Taylor, 1991)

Socrates' statement at 353b1 – 5 thus relies upon the interpretation of the medical analogy which I offered in the previous section – as a statement that an understanding of the role of pleasure in a good life will make a direct contribution to reaching the object of their enquiry (rather than being of secondary importance to it as some commentators have assumed). At 353b1 – 5, Socrates takes it as read that the importance of pleasure to their enquiry has already been established and that he only needs to remind Protagoras of this. Protagoras' willingness to proceed with this line of enquiry confirms that this is the case.

In exploring the opinion of the many on pleasure, Socrates highlights two key aspects of the many's account of the role of pleasure within a good life:

(i) Pleasure is the only criterion that the many have for a good life

‘ “And are these things¹¹ good for any other reason than that they result in pleasures and the relief from and avoidance of pains? Or can you point to any *goal which you focus upon* when you call them good, other than pleasures and pains?” They would say no, I think.’ (354b5 – c2, Taylor, 1991, *amended*)

Here, Socrates makes the point that pleasure is the only criterion or standard by which the many judge a life to be good. Taylor (1991, pp.177 – 8) suggests that it is not clear from Socrates' discussion with the many whether he is making the point that the many regard pleasure as:

- the only thing that is good in life;
- the same thing as a good life,

So, in Taylor's view, Socrates does not make it clear in what respect pleasure is the many's only criterion for goodness – we are left wondering whether they see the relationship between pleasure and goodness as a relationship of exclusivity (i.e. they believe pleasure is the only good) or of identity (i.e. they believe pleasure is identical with the good).

¹¹ 'These things' are aspects of life described by Socrates at 354b3 – 5: 'things like health and good bodily condition and the safety of the city and rule over others and wealth'. (Taylor, 1991)

(ii) They are consistently motivated to pursue pleasure in their lives

In fact, Socrates does subsequently clarify precisely in what sense pleasure is the many's only standard for a good life (although it turns out not to be either of the options which Taylor identifies). Pleasure is the only thing which motivates them to act and which they pursue as a goal in their lives:

'So [oukoun] you pursue pleasure as good, and avoid pain as evil?' (354c3 – 5, Taylor, 1991)

There is considerable disagreement amongst commentators as to whether there is evidence in the text that the many are psychological hedonists who are psychologically driven to pursue pleasure in their lives and have no choice other than to do so. Santas (1966), for example, argues that there is clear evidence of psychological hedonism at 356a8 – c1 and suggests that it is upon this that Socrates bases his conclusion that ignorance is the only possible explanation for the many's wrongdoing. Taylor (1991, pp.189 – 90) rejects this view arguing that there is no clear precedent for Santas' interpretation (pp.49 – 50) of the verbal adjectives employed in this passage¹² to imply psychological compulsion. Klosko (1980) argues that the evidence of psychological hedonism is, in fact, at 354c3 – 6 (quoted above). He suggests (p.313) that: "Psychological hedonism is introduced into the argument, quite in passing, at 354c3 – 6. This is the first appearance of Egoism in the argument, and the very off-handedness of its introduction is of some interest." He goes on to say: "The inference here (oukoun) clearly has the following structure. Since it has been demonstrated that pleasure is the good and pain the bad, granted the obvious truth (Egoism) that people pursue [sc. are psychologically driven to pursue] that which they believe to be good and avoid that which they take to be bad, it follows that people pursue pleasure and shun pain - as the good and the evil."

So, Klosko suggests that psychological hedonism is implicit in Socrates' statement at 354c3 – 6. On Klosko's interpretation, this statement builds upon what the many have agreed to about the nature of a good life, to draw a conclusion about *why* they pursue such a life (that is, because they are compelled to). Yet if we take 354c3 - 6 at face value, it is no more than a straightforward suggestion that the many *do*, in practice, pursue pleasure as something good and avoid pain as something bad.

¹² 'leptea', 'prakteon' and 'praktea'.

Socrates does not say explicitly that the many are psychologically compelled (or indeed compelled in any other way) to do so. I would suggest instead that 354c3 – 6 does not identify the reason *why* the many pursue pleasure, but simply confirms that they *do* pursue pleasure as something good in all their actions. If we interpret it in this way, it does not require us to assume any so-called 'obvious truth' about egoism. Nor does it portray Socrates as randomly introducing psychological hedonism into the argument without any apparent justification or preparation for doing so. Instead it forms an integral part of Socrates' illustration that, in their actions, the many demonstrate a consistent motivation to achieve pleasure in their lives.

Socrates shows that the many's motivation to pursue pleasure is consistent in two respects. Firstly, pleasure (or avoidance of pain) is the *only* thing which they pursue as a goal in their actions. Socrates emphasises that pleasure is the only goal [telos] the many have¹³ and he describes it as the telos of their actions three times - at 354b7, d2 and d8. Secondly, Socrates makes clear that the many's pursuit of pleasure is consistent in the sense that they are *always active in pursuit of this goal* – there are never occasions where they choose not to act at all and to have a rest from pursuing anything.¹⁴ The language Socrates uses demonstrates that the many actively pursue this goal throughout their lives. Pleasure is not a goal about which they are half-hearted, they focus all their attention upon it (apoblepein¹⁵ – 354c1, d2, d8), pursue it (diôkein – 354c4) and flee from (pheugein – 354c4) any pain which will prevent them from achieving it.

Socrates challenges the many on three successive occasions¹⁶ to name another goal within their lives, and emphasises that they are unable to do so. The recurring phrase 'allo ti' [telos] is used to drive home the point that there is nothing else which motivates the actions of the many. After making this point for the third time, Socrates explains why he is labouring it:

¹³ Taylor's translation of telos as 'result' fails to reflect adequately that the many are *motivated* to pursue pleasure. Not only do they regard it as the only good outcome/result of an action (as Taylor's translation suggests), but it is the only *goal* that they aim at in their actions and which they are motivated to achieve.

¹⁴ Even though the many have acknowledged that pleasure is their only goal, this still leaves open the possibility that sometimes they choose not to act and, therefore, not to pursue any goal at all. Socrates takes care to rule out this possibility.

¹⁵ Apoblepein usually carries the meaning of looking away from all other objects, at one – in this case pleasure. Taylor translates it as 'refer to' and in doing so loses the sense that pleasure is the sole focus of the many's attention and efforts in their actions.

¹⁶ 354b7 – c2, 354d1 – 3, 354d7 – e2.

‘Well once again I said, if you asked me, “But why are you going on at such length and elaboration about this [peri toutou]¹⁷?” I should say, I beg your pardon. First of all, it isn’t easy to show the real nature of what you call being weaker than pleasures; secondly the whole argument depends upon this [en toutô]¹⁸.’ (354e3 – 8, Taylor, 1991)

Here Socrates makes clear that he regards the consistent motivation of the many to pursue pleasure in their lives as the foundation of his argument for the impossibility of akrasia. In the next section, I will explore how he constructs this argument and reaches the conclusion that ignorance is the only possible explanation for wrongdoing.

2.4 Ignorance is the only possible explanation for wrongdoing

Socrates begins by reminding the many of their belief that a person can act against his knowledge of what it is best to do because he is overcome by a desire for pleasure. He suggests that it is an absurd belief in the light of their view of what a good life entails:

‘Now if you are content with that,¹⁹ and aren’t able to call anything good or bad except what results in that, listen to what follows. I maintain that, if that is your position, it is absurd for you to say that a man often does bad things though he knows they are bad and could refrain from doing them, because he is driven and overwhelmed by pleasures. And then again you say that though a man knows what is good, he is not willing to do it, because he is overcome by immediate pleasures.’ (355a3 – b3, Taylor, 1991)

To demonstrate this absurdity, (355b –c), Socrates suggests substituting the word ‘pleasant’ with the word ‘good’ (and ‘painful’ with ‘bad’), claiming that the many’s previous agreement that pleasure is the only good entitles him to do this:

‘Now that this is absurd will become perfectly clear if we stop using many terms all at once, ‘pleasant’, ‘painful’, ‘good’ and ‘bad’, and instead, since there turned out to be

¹⁷ ‘toutou’ being the consistent motivation of the many to pursue pleasure, which is demonstrated in how they live their lives.

¹⁸ See preceding footnote.

¹⁹ That is, with the position that a good life is a pleasant life without pain.

just two things, we use just two names for them, first of all 'good' and 'bad', and then 'pleasant' and 'painful'.' (355b3 – c1, Taylor, 1991)

Socrates then applies the substitution he has suggested; the many's belief in the power of pleasure to make a person knowingly do wrong, is thus reframed as the belief that a man can knowingly do what is bad because he is overcome by the good:

'Let's agree on that, then, and say, "Though a man knows that some things are bad, he does them all the same." Now if someone asks, "Why?" we shall say "Because he is overcome". "Overcome by what?" he will ask. And we can no longer say "By pleasure", for it has got another name, 'good', instead of 'pleasure' and so when he says "Overcome by what?" we shall answer, if you please, "Overcome by the good".' (355c1 – c8, Taylor, 1991)

At this stage, Socrates introduces an 'ill-mannered questioner' who suggests that this position is absurd:

'Now if our questioner happens to be an ill-mannered fellow, he'll burst out laughing and say "What an absurd thing to say! That somebody should do bad things, though he knows they are bad, and doesn't have to do them, because he is overcome by good things." '(355c8 – d3, Taylor, 1991)

The ill-mannered questioner goes on to point out that since what is good (pleasant) can be measured only in terms of its quantity, the many are claiming that they sometimes choose a smaller quantity of good things (pleasure) and opt instead of a larger quantity of bad things (pain):

' "What is it then", he will perhaps ask, "which makes good things not worth bad things or bad not worth good? Is it anything apart from the one's being larger and the other smaller; or the one's being more and the other fewer?" We shan't be able to suggest anything else. "Its clear, then", he will say, "that what you mean by being overcome is taking fewer good things at the cost of greater evils." ' (355d6 – e3, Taylor, 1991)

Interpretations of Socrates' argument

There is considerable disagreement amongst commentators about precisely what Socrates believes to be the absurdity in the opinion of the many (and about the way in which he attempts to show this absurdity). Similarly, there is disagreement as to whether Socrates does demonstrate a real weakness in their opinion or whether his argument is flawed. Taylor (1991, pp.181 – 186) discusses four different interpretations of precisely where Socrates believes the weakness in the opinion of the many lies:

- (i) The opinion of the many contains 'a kind of self-contradiction' (Vlastos, 1956). Gallop (1964) interprets Vlastos' position as the thesis 'that the view in question is presented as self-evidently absurd' – in other words, Socrates is suggesting that it contains a self-contradiction which is so obvious that it doesn't even need to be argued for.
- (ii) The expression 'being overcome by pleasure' results in an 'explicit self-contradiction' (Gallop, 1964). According to Gallop, a contradiction is exposed between the many's acceptance (at 357d3 – 7) that anyone who fails to make correct choices does not employ the appropriate knowledge and their original claim that they knowingly fail to make correct choices.
- (iii) The opinion of the many is at odds with their commitment to psychological hedonism (Santas, 1966).
- (iv) The opinion of the many is not actually self-contradictory,²⁰ but is absurd in the sense that it commits them to accepting that they willingly make absurd choices - of fewer good things at the cost of greater evils (Vlastos, 1969).

Taylor dismisses (i) as being vague and hard to distinguish from (ii). Furthermore, he points out that, to the extent that it can be distinguished from (ii), it is incorrect in its assumption that Socrates does not argue for/make explicit the absurdity in the opinion of the many. That is precisely what the ill-mannered questioner's analysis is designed to achieve.

Taylor rejects (iv) because, he claims, the many do provide empirical evidence that people really do make such 'absurd' choices. He rules (iii) out because he does not

²⁰ In the sense of containing directly contradictory statements. Instead, Vlastos argues that the many's position presents them as making absurd choices for which (once their commitment to hedonism has been made clear to them) they cannot offer any valid or logical explanation.

accept that the many are, in fact, committed to psychological hedonism. So, Taylor opts for interpretation (ii) and claims that Socrates is exposing an explicit self-contradiction in the many's claim that they *knowingly* make wrong choices. Taylor suggests (p.192), however, that this interpretation assumes a fallacy in Socrates' argument.²¹

Klosko (1980) argues against Taylor's interpretation of this part of the dialogue. He claims instead that the weakness which Socrates exposes is that the opinion of the many is at odds with their psychological hedonism (i.e. (iii) above). Klosko argues that the psychological hedonism of the many is first introduced at 354c3 – 5, then used to expose the weakness in the opinion of the many, and finally, used at the end of the dialogue to establish the unity of courage and wisdom. He suggests that it is upon psychological hedonism which Socrates builds the 'ignorance theorem' (i.e. that ignorance is the only possible explanation for wrongdoing) which is essential for the remainder of his argument.

According to Klosko's account of Socrates' argument, the weakness in the opinion of the many on knowledge is that it is at odds with their psychological motivation. The many give an explanation of their wrongdoing which directly contradicts their explanation of what motivates all their actions. Raphael Woolf (2002, 224 ff.) offers a similar interpretation to Klosko, but he suggests that the contradiction to which Socrates draws attention is not between one statement (about the weakness of knowledge) and another (about their psychological motivation). Instead, he claims, the contradiction is between the many's statement (about the weakness of knowledge) and their actions (in which they always, because of their psychological compulsion to do so, pursue what they know to be best). He refers to this as 'word deed inconsistency' (WDI) and suggests that the akrasia argument is 'both untypical and paradigmatic of Socratic inquiry' (p.251). It is untypical because it focuses on inconsistency between word and deed (WDI) rather than between one statement and another ('word word inconsistency' – WWI). It is paradigmatic because: 'The onus in deciding matters is [therefore] placed on our reflective assessment of the principles by which we live our lives' (p. 251). In this particular (untypical) case, Woolf suggests,

²¹ Taylor claims that Socrates makes a false move from gaining the many's agreement (357b1 – 4) 'that if anyone regularly makes correct choices of pleasures and pain he employs the appropriate sort of knowledge', to assuming their agreement (357d3 – 7) 'that anyone who fails to make correct choices does not employ the appropriate knowledge.' Taylor points out that Socrates cannot infer from 357b1 – 4 that the many have agreed that acting wrongly is always due to a lack of knowledge; it could also be due to a failure to act upon their knowledge.

Socrates uses our actual actions as well as our statements of beliefs to illustrate the principles by which we live our lives and to lead us to reflect upon the consistency of these principles.

Klosko's and Woolf's interpretations are attractive in the sense that they do not depend upon there being any fallacy in Socrates' argument. Both interpretations suggest that the absurdity which Socrates claims to exist is a valid inference from the psychological hedonism of the many. As I suggested in 2.3 above, however, there is limited textual evidence that the many are psychologically compelled to pursue pleasure.

The stages of Socrates' argument

I would suggest that Socrates actually bases his argument upon the many's acknowledgement that they are consistently motivated to pursue pleasure as a goal in their lives (as discussed in 2.3 above). He achieves this in three main stages:

Stage 1

In the first stage of Socrates' argument, he uses the many's acknowledgement that pleasure is the only goal they pursue as good in order to discount their empirical evidence of wrongdoing. He shows that their claim that they sometimes knowingly do wrong because they are overcome by a desire for pleasure is entirely at odds with their acknowledgement that they consistently pursue pleasure as a goal because they believe it is the only good. Socrates illustrates this (355b – c) by the substitution of good and bad (for pleasant and painful) into the many's account of akrasia and by the ill-mannered questioner's subsequent assertion (355c1 – 8) that this renders their account of wrongdoing absurd. It turns out that what the many cite as evidence of wrongdoing is, in fact, further evidence of their pursuing what is good.

Stage 2

In the second stage of Socrates' argument, he formulates an account of wrongdoing based on the many's account of a good life as the consistent pursuit of pleasure (to replace their own account which has turned out to be invalid). He demonstrates (with the help of the ill-mannered questioner) that, in the light of the hedonism of the many, the only account of wrongdoing they can provide is to choose a smaller amount of pleasure in preference to a larger amount of pleasure. The ill-mannered questioner makes this point at 355d6 – e3.

Stage 3

Finally, having established this as the only valid account of wrongdoing, Socrates concludes at 357c6 ff. that the only possible explanation for such wrongdoing is ignorance of the right course of action:

'Well, if this experience isn't being overcome by pleasure, what is it then? What do you call it? Tell us. If we had then straight away said "Error" you would have laughed at us; but now, if you laugh at us you will be laughing at yourselves. For you have agreed that those who go wrong in their choice of pleasures and pains – which is to say, of good and bad things – go wrong from lack of knowledge ...And you surely know yourselves that wrong action done without knowledge is done in error.' (357c6 – e1, Taylor, 1991)

The basis for Socrates' conclusion

The basis for Socrates' conclusion at stage 3 is not clearly stated at this point in the dialogue. It has, however, already been stated at 354e3 – 8. Here Socrates made a clear statement that 'the whole argument' for the impossibility of akrasia depended upon the consistent motivation of the many to pursue pleasure in their lives. We should, therefore, read his conclusion at 357c6 – e1 in the light of this statement. When we do so, we find that the conclusion is a valid one which is not (as other commentators have suggested) founded upon a fallacious argument or upon an assumption of psychological hedonism for which there is limited evidence in the text. Instead, it is founded directly upon the many's acknowledgement that they are consistently motivated to pursue pleasure because they believe it is the only good. Based on what the many have agreed to about their actions, the only possible account of wrongdoing (with wrongdoing defined as failing to choose the greatest amount of pleasure) is ignorance of the right course of action. Their acceptance that, in practice, maximisation of pleasure in their lives is the *only* goal they pursue rules out the possibility that they would knowingly pursue a different goal. So, there is no possibility (based on what they have told Socrates about the reality of their actions) that they would knowingly choose a smaller quantity of pleasure. Furthermore, their acknowledgement that that they actively pursue pleasure throughout their lives rules out the possibility that they would ever fail to pursue any goal at all (and thus, by their inactivity, 'choose' a smaller quantity of pleasure).

So, of the interpretations discussed above, I would suggest Gallop's (1964) is the most accurate. Socrates does, as Gallop claims, expose a self-contradiction between the many's original claim that they knowingly fail to make correct choices and their acknowledgement that anyone who fails to make correct choices does not employ the appropriate knowledge. However, Socrates exposes a genuine contradiction and his argument is not fallacious as Taylor suggests. The possibility of a failure to act upon the knowledge they possess (which Taylor claims is the flaw in Socrates' argument) has been carefully ruled out by the many's account of how they act in reality and by their recognition that they actively pursue pleasure in everything they do.

Word Deed Inconsistency

Socrates' argument has thus exposed a genuine inconsistency between:

- (i) the many's belief in the weakness of knowledge;
- (ii) their account of their actions as consistently motivated towards the pursuit of a single goal (what is good/most pleasant).

Socrates has, as Woolf²² argues, demonstrated an inconsistency between the many's belief about the nature of aretê and the reality of their actions (that is, the principle they actually live their lives by). This does set it apart from many other Socratic arguments which focus on exposing inconsistency between the interlocutor's beliefs. I would suggest that Socrates' basis of this particular argument on an examination of the reality of the interlocutor's actions underlines that fact that the *Protagoras* as a whole is concerned with identifying a practical model of aretê – one which will save our lives by enabling us consistently to do what is right. The arguments which establish such a model must, therefore, focus on how we act in practice as well as upon our beliefs about what is right.

The conclusion which Socrates reaches at 357c – e1 represents the completion of the first part of the practical sketch of the type of wisdom which would be sufficient for a good life. He has offered an account - the many's account - of a good life which wisdom alone would be sufficient to achieve. It is a life founded upon the belief that pleasure is the only good.

²² As discussed above.

2.5 Wisdom as the Technê of Measurement

Having drawn in the first feature of his sketch at 357c6 – d6, Socrates immediately adds the second feature which he has identified as a key part of the sketch – namely for it to illustrate clearly whether the type of wisdom which is sufficient for a good life is essentially technical or non-technical. At 357d6 – 7 he confirms that the type of wisdom which is sufficient to achieve a good life (as defined by the many) is a technê - more specifically, it is the technê of measuring pleasure.

Socrates makes clear that the need for a technical model of wisdom as measurement is directly related to the many's account of a good life:

'Well then, gentlemen; since we have seen that the preservation of our life depends on a correct choice of pleasure and pain, be it more or less, larger or smaller or further or nearer, doesn't it seem that the thing that saves our lives is some technique of measurement, to determine which are more, or less, or equal to one another?' (357a5 – b3, Taylor, 1991)

357a5 – b3 clarifies that this technical model of wisdom is derived not just from a hedonistic account of a good life, but from the specific type of hedonism which the many have agreed to, in which a good life can be judged only by the quantity of pleasure achieved. Socrates has already established with the many that quantity is the only valid criterion for measuring pleasure:

'What is it then, he [the ill-mannered questioner] will perhaps ask, which makes good things not worth bad things or bad not worth good? Is it anything apart from the one's being larger and the other smaller; or the one's being more and the other fewer? We shan't be able to suggest anything else.' (355d6 – e2, Taylor, 1991)

Furthermore, the many have agreed that the quantity of pleasure can only be calculated over the long-term. An action which results in immediate pleasure in the short-term but causes greater pain in the long-term is bad (i.e. it adds to the overall amount of pain in our life). Similarly, an action which results in immediate pain, but leads to greater pleasure in the long-term, is good (i.e. it adds to the overall amount of pleasure in our life):

‘So it’s pain which you regard as evil, and pleasure as good, since you even call enjoyment itself bad *when it deprives you of greater pleasures than it has in itself or leads to pains which are greater than its own pleasures*.....And again, surely it’s the same about suffering pain itself. Don’t you call suffering pain itself good *when it gets rid of greater pains than it has in itself, or when it leads to pleasures which are greater than the pains?*’ (354c5 – e7, Taylor 1991)

In fact, a good (pleasant) life can only be measured over a lifetime:

‘But even now you are at liberty to withdraw, if you can give any other²³ account of the good than pleasure, or of evil than pain. Or are you content to say that it is a pleasant life without pains?’ (354e8 – 355a3, Taylor, 1991)²⁴

It is much harder for anyone to judge which of several possible actions will result in the predominance of pleasure over a lifetime than it is to judge which will result in the most immediate pleasure. Socrates draws attention to two factors which are likely to distort the former kind of judgement:

- the proximity/distance in time of the pleasure to be obtained
- the proximity/distance in space of the pleasure to be obtained

(i) Proximity/distance in time

Given the choice between receiving £100 now and receiving £500 in a year’s time, it is credible that someone would choose the former because of its immediacy. This appears to be the argument which Socrates is addressing at 356a when he introduces an imaginary objector:

‘But, Socrates, there is a great difference between immediate pleasure and pleasure and pain at a later time.’ (356a5 – 7, Taylor, 1991)

²³ Here again, Socrates uses the motif of ‘*allo ti*’ to stress exactly what the many’s view of a good life entails.

Previously he used this phrase to emphasise that they were not motivated by any goal other than pleasure (see note 13 above). Here he uses it to make clear that they do not evaluate pleasure in any way other than by its quantity.

²⁴ Taylor (1991, pp.178 – 9) points out that 353e5 – 354a1 has made it clear that ‘pleasant’ is to be understood as an abbreviation for ‘the predominance of pleasure over pain’.

Socrates answers this objection by saying that the quantity of pleasure and pain is the only factor which can be taken into account. His reply reflects the principle to which the many have agreed - that the only measure of a good life is a life in which pleasure predominates. Taylor (1991, p.193) supports the imaginary objector and argues that influence by temporal proximity does not represent a distortion of judgement, but rather the choice of one factor (immediacy) over another (quantity of pleasure). He does not, however, take into account the particular type of hedonism which Socrates has attributed to the many. The many have conceded that no factor other than the quantity of pleasure can influence their actions. So, the only possible explanation for the many giving undue weight to the proximity rather than the quantity of pleasure is a failure to judge accurately the quantity of pleasure which will arise from one's actions in the long-term (because the proximity of the pleasure makes its appear larger than it is and thus distorts our judgement).

(ii) Proximity/distance in space

From 356c, Socrates discusses another factor which may distort one's judgement:

'Now since that is so, I shall say, answer me this. Do the same magnitudes look bigger when you see them from near at hand, and smaller at a distance, or not? They will say that they do. And similarly with thicknesses and numbers? And the same sounds are louder near at hand and softer at a distance?' (356c4 – 8, Taylor, 1991)

Taylor (1991, p.193) believes Socrates is drawing a parallel between actions which are motivated/influenced by the temporal proximity of their object and those which are motivated/influenced by the spatial proximity of their object. He suggests that Socrates is using the latter to illustrate the former. However, it is not clear from the text that Socrates is using spatial proximity as an example to illustrate the effect of temporal proximity. The phrase 'now since this is so' (356c4), which introduces the discussion of distance in space, follows Socrates' statement that the quantity of pleasure should be the only criterion for judgement. Therefore, it seems likely that it refers directly to this statement, and serves to introduce distance in space as a further factor which can distort our judgement (rather than to illustrate the previous factor). So, for example, the beauty of an object (and the pleasure to be derived from it) may be underestimated if it is viewed from a distance.

The model of knowledge as the art of measurement is then introduced (357a5 – b3, Taylor, 1991) as the means of overcoming these misleading appearances – as such Socrates presents it as the salvation of our lives. Socrates suggests that, by providing accurate quantitative information, on an ordinal scale of value (where the greater quantity of pleasure is of more value than the less), it offers a practical means of reaching the right decision about the quantity of pleasure that will result, over a lifetime, from our actions. It thus provides a means of putting into practice the rather complex version of hedonism which Socrates has attributed to the many.

2.6 A Serious Theory of Knowledge?

Many commentators have rejected the possibility that Socrates intends us to take seriously the *Protagoras*' model of knowledge as the art of measurement. Whilst accepting that Socrates is committed to establishing that aretê is knowledge and to disproving the possibility of akrasia, they believe that his use of the model of knowledge as measurement (and the hedonistic calculus on which it is founded) to achieve this is ad hominem.²⁵

An alternative, or more extreme, version of this position denies that Plato is actually committed to defending a purely intellectualist position (i.e. the position that knowledge is sufficient for aretê and that we, therefore, do not need to account for/acknowledge the power of irrational desires in explaining aretê). Annas (1999, chapter 6), for example, points to evidence from later Platonists which suggests that Plato never held a purely intellectualist position which did not acknowledge or account for irrational desires. In their account of Platonic psychology, later Platonists assumed that Plato always took account of irrational desires, while accepting that these received less attention in some dialogues than others. On this interpretation, Plato had never, in fact, denied the power of irrational desire or believed in the hedonism on which this denial is based. This leaves us with the question of precisely what Plato is trying to achieve in his discussion of hedonism in the *Protagoras*. Annas devotes an Appendix (pp.167 – 171) to this question. She suggests that: 'all we can reasonably infer is that Plato thought hedonism in this form worth formulating and discussing, and so, introduced it into Socrates' argument.' She doesn't accept,

²⁵ This view is adopted by e.g. Sullivan (1961), Zeyl (1980) and Stokes (1986). However, Zeyl suggests that Socrates' primary objective in the dialogue is to attack the sophists rather than to establish any particular philosophical position.

however, that hedonism is of significance beyond its immediate context in the *Protagoras*.

Kahn (1996) adopts a similar position, rejecting the view that Socrates is defending an intellectualist model of aretê. He suggests that 'Socrates is here deluding the sophists with a rationalist theory of choice, just as he has deluded them with Laconic philosophy in the interpretation of Simonides' poem.....' (p.242). Kahn suggests that, while Plato remains committed to the truth of the paradox that no one does wrong willingly, his use of Socratic intellectualism to establish its truth is ad hominem. For Kahn, 'He [Plato] is no more committed to hedonism and the rationalist decision theory than he is to the virtuoso interpretation of Simonides' poem.' (p.242)

A number of commentators do, however, believe that Socrates intends us to take seriously the hedonist philosophy which he introduces. Most concentrate either on providing textual evidence from the *Protagoras* to support the view that hedonism is a Socratic thesis²⁶ or on establishing some consistency between the version of aretê presented in the *Protagoras* and in other Socratic dialogues²⁷. Irwin (1995, chapter 6), while adopting a pro-hedonist reading of the *Protagoras*, presents a different case in support of this. He argues (p.91) that: 'The appeal to hedonism in the *Protagoras* is intelligible if the dialogue presents Plato's reflections on Socratic method and ethical theory.' Irwin presents the hedonistic calculus as a restatement of Socratic intellectualism, which takes account of the non-cognitive aspects of aretê (i.e. motivation) which had not been addressed in earlier Socratic dialogues.

The scale of controversy over the textual evidence as to Socrates' own attitude towards hedonism and to the hedonistic calculus on which the art of measurement is founded is a reflection of the ambiguity which exists in the text with regard to Socrates'/Plato's own opinion of a model of knowledge as measurement with its sole criterion as pleasure. Yet those who believe that the metrêtikê technê is no more than an ad hominem device which Socrates regards as a bit of a joke must bear in mind that it is the conclusion to a search for the 'sôtêria tou biou' which Socrates

²⁶ E.g. Taylor (1991, pp.208 – 210) argues that 360a2 – 3 provides 'the strongest evidence that Socrates is represented by Plato as sharing the assumptions of the common man'. The basis for his argument is that Socrates' proposition here - that everything good is also pleasant - is not essential to his argument at this stage in the dialogue. Therefore, Taylor suggests, the only reason for including this proposition would be if Socrates himself supports it.

²⁷ E.g. Gosling & Taylor (1982, ch3 – 4), Rudebusch (1999).

instigated at the outset of the dialogue and about which (as I argued in chapter one) he made clear he was entirely serious.

More powerful than any individual piece of textual evidence, however, is the challenge which the metrêtikê technê presents to those who reject it. Anyone who rejects this model of aretê (but who accepts that knowledge is sufficient for aretê) must provide an alternative account which offers, as the metrêtikê technê does:

- a determinate standard for a good life;
- a practical means of making accurate judgements, founded upon a objective truth about how we should live;
- an account of our motivation to act upon and follow these judgements.

Determinacy

By introducing a model of aretê within which what is good is defined as the greatest amount of pleasure over a lifetime, Socrates has introduced a standard for a good life which can be expressed purely in terms of quantity. In doing so, he has shown how the determinate structure of mathematics can be applied to the question of how we should live our lives. The metrêtikê technê enables us to reduce difficult ethical choices to determinate arithmetical calculations. Socrates makes this clear in three stages. Firstly, he explains (356a3 – 5) exactly how the amount of pleasure in our lives can be quantified – in terms of size (meizô te kai smikrotera), number (pleiô kai elattô) or intensity (mallon kai hêttôn). Secondly, he rules out the possibility that the value of pleasure can be judged against standards other than quantity, and makes a strong statement that quantity is the only standard against which pleasure should be measured:

‘For if you weigh pleasant things against pleasant, you always have to take the larger and the more, and if you weigh painful against painful, you always have to take the less and the smaller. And if you weigh pleasant against painful, if the painful are outweighed by the pleasant, no matter which are nearer and which more distant, you have to do whatever brings the pleasant about, and if the pleasant are outweighed by the painful, you have to avoid doing it.’ (356b3 – c1, Taylor 1991)

Finally, Socrates introduces the metrêtikê technê as 'the art concerned with larger and smaller quantities' (357a2) – an art which enables us to determine what is good (most pleasant) in our lives. In doing so, Socrates highlights the potential of mathematics to bring determinacy to the question of how we live our lives and offers a practical model through which this potential can be realised.

Socrates had drawn attention to the need for a model of this kind in an earlier dialogue - the *Euthyphro* - where he acknowledged the difficulty of reaching the truth about subjects which cannot be measured accurately or whose nature cannot be expressed numerically. In this category he included beauty, justice and goodness itself:

'[Socrates] What are the subjects of difference that cause hatred and anger? Let us look at it this way. If you and I were to differ about numbers as to which is the greater, would this difference make us enemies and angry with each other, or would we proceed to count and soon resolve our difference about this?

[Euthyphro] We would certainly do so.

[Socrates] Again, if we differed about the larger and the smaller, we would turn to measurement and soon cease to differ.

[Euthyphro] That is so.

[Socrates] And about the heavier and the lighter, we would resort to weighing and be reconciled.

[Euthyphro] Of course.

[Socrates] What subject of difference would make us angry and hostile to each other if we were unable to come to a decision? Perhaps you do not have an answer ready, but examine as I tell you whether these subjects are the just and the unjust, the beautiful and the ugly, the good and the bad. Are these not the subjects of difference about which, when we are unable to come to a satisfactory decision, you and I and other men become hostile to each other whenever we do?

[Euthyphro] That is the difference, Socrates, about those subjects.' (*Euthyphro* 7b6 – d8, Grube, Hackett edition, 1997)

This can be interpreted as a negative or sceptical statement by Socrates to the effect that the attempt to reach an understanding of piety (the main subject of discussion in this dialogue) or of other parts of aretê is a futile one; aretê cannot be expressed accurately and precisely and lacks the determinacy of mathematical subjects which can be expressed and judged precisely, in terms of number and quantity. A more

positive interpretation of the passage, however, is offered by Nussbaum (1986, p.106) who suggests that 'already in the *Euthyphro*, Socrates sees its [mathematics'] attraction as a model for practical deliberation'. Nussbaum believes that Socrates/Plato has recognised the potential of mathematics for bringing some determinacy to the question of how it is right to live.

Nussbaum's interpretation is supported by the *Protagoras* where, through the model of knowledge as measurement, Plato explores the potential of arithmetic as a basis for aretê. The metrêtikê technê has goodness as its object, but it is a version of goodness (pleasure) which has quantity as its only standard of measurement and where all instances of goodness are commensurable.²⁸ So, through the art of measurement Socrates explores how we can accurately express the value of the choices we have in life by fixing a numerical quantity to each choice. In doing this we have reduced difficult choices to determinate, commensurate quantities. The strength of the art of measurement rests in its potential for applying the determinate structure of mathematics to the question of how we should live our lives.

²⁸ I would suggest that there is sufficient evidence from the text of the *Protagoras* that underpinning the model of knowledge as measurement is the principle that all pleasures are commensurable. In other words, Socrates is suggesting that, ultimately, all pleasures can be reduced to a homogeneous quantity, which can be measured, compared and the maximum quantity of pleasure identified. Measurement of such homogeneous quantities provides a means of choosing between them; the maximum quantity of pleasure should always be chosen. The analogy of weighing which Socrates uses at 356b3 – c1 supports this interpretation. Weighing involves comparing different quantities on a single scale of measurement and making a decision on this basis.

Richardson (1990) suggests that most commentators on the *Protagoras* have assumed that the principle of commensurability of pleasure underpins the model of knowledge as measurement. He refers, in particular, to Irwin (1977) and Nussbaum (1986) who 'treat commensurability as the key to a proper understanding of the *Protagoras*' (p.9). Richardson argues against this assumption which, he claims, has significantly skewed interpretation of this model of knowledge and the account of its development. Richardson claims (p.19) that: 'Instead, he [Socrates] leaves the door open for a possible incommensurability of pleasures and pains. The very least one can say is that Socrates (or Plato) in the *Protagoras* is not concerned to pin down the standard of choice in any precise way as involving the maximization of a homogeneous quantity'. Richardson's main evidence for his interpretation comes from the fact that Socrates expresses the standard(s) for quantification in several ways:

- 'the one being larger and the other smaller; or the one being more and the other fewer' (355d8 – e1);
- 'an excess or deficiency with respect to each other' (356a2 – 3);
- 'greater or smaller with respect to each other, or more or fewer, or more and less' (356a3 – 5, Richardson, 1990).

Richardson attaches significance to these differences and suggests that Plato has Socrates 'devote extra words to keeping the door open for the incommensurability of pleasures and pains' (p.15). Yet within the immediate context – Socrates' introduction of measurement as a model for accurate knowledge and right action - it seems more logical to interpret 355d – 356a as a detailed discussion of how different pleasures can, in fact, be commensurable. Socrates is suggesting that, if we are to measure pleasure accurately, we must take into account a range of factors within our measurement - but all of these are ultimately reducible to the quantity of pleasure in our life.

Practical Accuracy and Objective Truth

In introducing the metrêtikê technê, Socrates emphasises that living a good life entails making correct choices about the quantity of pleasure in our lives. He refers, three times, to the need to make correct, comparative choices between different quantities of pleasure. In doing so, he makes the point that achieving a good life depends upon a capacity for accurate mathematical judgement and that the art of measurement enables us to achieve this:

‘Well then, gentlemen; since we have seen that the preservation of our life depends on a *correct choice* of pleasure and pain, be it more or less, larger or smaller or further or nearer, doesn’t it seem that the thing that saves our lives is some technique of measurement, to determine which are more, or less, or equal to each other?’
(357a5 – b3, Taylor 1991, my italics)

Socrates is suggesting here that the ability of measurement to save our lives rests in its capacity to enable us to make correct choices, based on accurate information about the quantity of pleasure which will result from our actions. Immediately after this, at 357b5, he makes the claim that measurement is necessarily both a technê and an epistêmê. It is helpful to read his use of these two terms in the light of 357a5 – b3. Both can describe a specific field of knowledge or expertise which brings with it practical reliability – the ability to get things right in practice. So, in fact, either one would have been sufficient to describe the arithmetical skill of measurement, which will result in accurate decisions about how we should live. Taylor’s translation of ‘technê kai epistêmê’ - ‘an art which embodies exact knowledge’ - implies that Socrates is simply using epistêmê to emphasise the ‘exact knowledge’ (of arithmetic) that is an integral part of the technê of measurement.

However, as well as generally describing a field of knowledge/expertise, epistêmê can also refer, more specifically, to a science - a body of knowledge founded upon objectively established truths (such as geometry, medicine or astronomy). In this sense, it would not normally be applied to practical crafts such as carpentry and shipbuilding. I would suggest that it is in the sense of a science that Socrates is using epistêmê here and that his purpose in doing so is to raise the status of the art of measurement. He is making the point that not only does it bring technical skill and expertise (although it does do this) but that it is founded upon a scientific truth about how we should live. It is not *just* a humble technê which consists purely in the ability

to calculate quantities of pleasure accurately , but is also a precise science of how we should live, founded upon an objective truth – the truth that what is good is the maximum quantity of pleasure over a lifetime. The metrêtikê technê, therefore, offers the best of both worlds – an objective truth about what constitutes a good life and the practical skill to transfer this truth into practice. The combination of the two means that, if we possess the metrêtikê technê, we will never be misled or mistaken in our decisions about how we should live.

Socrates' discussion with the ill-mannered questioner illustrates the ability of the metrêtikê technê to bring practical accuracy and scientific precision to the decisions we make. Through this discussion, Socrates shows how the metrêtikê technê uses the practical skill of measurement (which he compares to weighing) to make accurate choices about what is most pleasant and rule out misleading appearances:

'Rather like someone who is good at weighing things, add up all the pleasant things and all the painful, and put the element of nearness and distance in the scale as well, and then say which are the more.' (356a8 – b3, Taylor, 1991)

This very practical activity not only results in accurate calculations, but also gives us a clear view of the objective truth about how we should act/live.

'...but measurement would have made these appearances powerless, and given us peace of mind by showing us the truth and letting us get a firm grasp of it, and so would have saved our lives.' (356d7 – e2, Taylor, 1991)

Motivation

The metrêtikê technê also provides a comprehensive account, founded upon hedonism, of our motivation to act in accordance with our knowledge of what it is best to do. If we reject pleasure as the foundation of aretê, then we must offer an alternative account of what motivates us to act unfailingly in pursuit of what is good.

The strength of the metrêtikê technê rests in its ability to incorporate these three factors which are an essential part of any account of wisdom which is sufficient for aretê. Socrates is clearly aware of its strength in this respect, and to this extent, it is difficult to deny that he takes the model seriously. At the very least, he presents it as a challenge to come up with something better – something that still brings

determinacy and accuracy to our understanding of the nature of a good life and a clear account of why we would always act upon this understanding.

At the same time, Socrates does acknowledge that the metrêtikê technê is only a sketch which will require more detail and refinement before it is complete. He makes clear that there is more hard work left to do before we can rest secure in the fact that measurement is the salvation of our lives. He says:

‘And since it’s measurement, then necessarily it’s an art which embodies exact knowledge.

[Protagoras] Yes.

Now which art and what knowledge, we shall enquire later. But this suffices to show that it is knowledge, and to provide the demonstration that Protagoras and I are required to give in reply to your question.’ (357b4 – c1, Taylor, 1991)

Taylor (1991, pp.194 – 5), commenting on this statement, suggests that ‘since we already know that the art in question is the art of measuring pleasures and pains, Socrates must mean that the specification of the art will give details of how pleasures and pains are measured, e.g. what the unit of measurement is.’ He points out that Socrates doesn’t actually keep this undertaking in the *Protagoras* or in later dialogues. Adam & Adam (2nd edition 1905, p.187) mention that Siebeck (*Zur Chronologie der Platonischen Dialogen* p.121 ff.) sees this as a reference to *Statesman* 283d ff. where measurement reemerges as the basilikê technê.

Both of these interpretations suggest that Socrates means there is more detail to supply about the metrêtikê technê - precisely how it works and what it looks like. Socrates has sketched a broad outline and will tell us the detail later. However, I would suggest that Socrates is making a different point here. He has shown, as he points out at 357b4 – c1, that a technical model of knowledge is required to disprove the many’s belief in akrasia. What remains to be done is to show how a technê can be reconciled with aretê. A different translation of 357b5 – 6 would reflect this better:

‘So, what sort of technê and wisdom this is,²⁹ we will investigate later.’ (my translation)

²⁹ In other words, ‘What sort of technê can also be a form of wisdom that is sufficient for aretê, we will investigate later.’

Socrates is not suggesting a need to explore in further detail how we can measure pleasure. As far as he is concerned, he has already discussed this at length at 356a – c. Instead, he is acknowledging that his sketch of wisdom as a technê does not address how the way we should live our lives can, in practice, be reduced to a technical skill – particularly one as precise as measurement. Socrates recognises that this must be explored before his sketch can be developed into a full illustration. At the same time, he is asserting that the principle that wisdom is a technê, with the determinacy that brings to the question of how we live our lives, is not open to debate.

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined the argument through which Socrates creates a sketch of the type of wisdom which would be sufficient for a good life. I have suggested that his sketch of the metrêtikê technê represents the conclusion of the search which Socrates instigated at the very beginning of the dialogue for a practical model of wisdom which will enable us to achieve a good life and, in doing so, will be 'the salvation of our lives'. The sketch is carefully constructed upon and validly derived from the specific type of hedonism which Socrates has attributed to the many and does not, as many commentators have assumed, depend upon any fallacy in Socrates' argument.

I have shown that Socrates clearly identifies the strengths of the metrêtikê technê as a practical means of achieving a good life. He demonstrates that it brings determinacy and practical accuracy to the decisions we have to make about how we should live, and is founded on an objective truth about the nature of a good life. In addition, it offers an account of our motivation to act consistently upon our knowledge of what is right to do. The care Socrates takes to emphasise these strengths counts against those who argue that he does not take the metrêtikê technê seriously.

I have also shown, however, that Socrates is well aware (as he points out at 357b4 – c1) that there is more work to do to demonstrate that aretê is, as his sketch entails, really reconcilable with a technê. In the next chapter I will discuss how, from *Protagoras* 358a, Socrates evaluates his sketch of wisdom as the metrêtikê technê. He does this by resuming his argument to establish the unity of courage with wisdom and applying the metrêtikê technê within this argument. In doing so, he appears to establish that a technical model of wisdom (founded upon hedonism) can indeed be

sufficient for aretê and to demonstrate that Protagoras' concern³⁰ about this has no validity. I will suggest, however, that the reluctance with which Protagoras accepts this conclusion draws attention to some genuine weaknesses within Socrates' argument and indicates dramatically that the objections which Protagoras raised earlier in the dialogue have not been fully addressed. I will also discuss the evidence that, in Socrates' presentation of the argument from 358a, he hints that he himself is aware of these weaknesses.

In later chapters, however, I will suggest that Socrates does not abandon the metrêtikê technê in subsequent dialogues, although it is some time before it again plays as prominent a part as it does in the *Protagoras*. During the time when the metrêtikê technê appears to be 'on the back burner', Socrates is actively developing and refining it (particularly in the *Gorgias*, *Phaedo* and *Republic*). I will argue that, throughout this process, Socrates continues to accept the two main features of the metrêtikê technê – namely the fundamental role it gives pleasure within a good life and its account of aretê as essentially technical. In the *Statesman* the metrêtikê technê finally re-emerges as the basilikê technê, which is the basis for aretê in the city. While its form has developed considerably from the metrêtikê technê, the essential features of Socrates' original sketch remain intact.

³⁰ His instinct that each part of aretê has its own distinguishing characteristics and that there must, therefore, be more to it than technical knowledge alone.

Sketching the ‘Sôtêria Tou Biou’

Plato and the Art of Measurement

Chapter 3 – Evaluating the Sketch

(*Protagoras* 358a – 362a)

3.1 Introduction

In chapter one I suggested that, in the opening frames of the *Protagoras*, Socrates establishes that his principal objective within the dialogue is to identify what type of knowledge would be sufficient for aretê. He makes clear that he wants to achieve an understanding of the type of wisdom which, by enabling us to live a life which is truly kalon¹, will be the ‘salvation of our lives’. At the same time he emphasises the importance of accomplishing this objective, by stressing that our lives are endangered when we are exposed to the wrong type of teaching. Socrates warns Hippocrates (313 – 4) that, before becoming a pupil of Protagoras, he must carefully examine exactly what kind of knowledge he will acquire, just as he would inspect food before he eats it.

Socrates devotes the first part of the *Protagoras*, up to 351b, to planning and preparing for a sketch of the type of knowledge which would be sufficient for a good life. In doing so, he identifies three essential features which must be part of the sketch. Firstly it must illustrate (that is, provide a model of) a good life for which wisdom alone would be sufficient. Secondly, it must show whether the type of wisdom required for such a life is essentially technical or non-technical. Finally, it must enable Socrates to overcome Protagoras’ strongly-held conviction that each part of aretê has its own distinguishing characteristics and that wisdom on its own cannot be sufficient for a good life.

In chapter two I discussed how, from 351b, Socrates starts to create the sketch which he has been planning up to this point in the dialogue. I suggested that, by 357e, he has completed a sketch of the metrêtikê technê - a model of wisdom which,

¹ In chapter one I argue that the first frame (309a1 – 310a7) establishes to kalon within the dialogue as a standard of value for what is good and, therefore, desirable in living our lives. Socrates and his companion compare Alcibiades and Protagoras on this basis and Socrates argues that Protagoras is kalliôn on account of his wisdom.

it appears, would be sufficient for aretê.² I argued that Socrates is entirely serious in his introduction of this model and presents it as the basis for a practical account of aretê. At 357b5 – c1, however, Socrates acknowledges that this model will need further examination. Here, Socrates is not referring to the need to explore further how pleasure can be measured (as some commentators have assumed) but to the need to examine whether the ability to measure pleasure accurately in our lives can, in practice, provide the wisdom we need to achieve aretê. In fact, he is demonstrating a commitment to inspect and evaluate his own model of knowledge in order to see whether it will, in reality, be sufficient to achieve a life which is truly kalon. In doing so, Socrates acknowledges that the advice he gave to Hippocrates applies to his own account of wisdom just as much as to any other – the metrêtikê technê must be 'tested before use' to ensure that it does not endanger our lives.

In this chapter I will discuss how Socrates fulfils the commitment which he made at 357b to evaluate the metrêtikê technê and thus ensure that it is 'safe' for us to use in living our lives. He begins to do this at 358a, when he resumes the argument (abandoned at 351b) to establish the unity of courage with wisdom and applies the principles which underpin the metrêtikê technê within his argument. In sections two and three, I will argue against those who claim that Socrates' argument from 358a is flawed and will attempt to demonstrate that Socrates does put forward a valid argument, derived directly from premises that the sophists have agreed to, to demonstrate that the metrêtikê technê can be sufficient for aretê.

Yet, at the conclusion of this argument (360d4 – 5), Socrates refers only to the sufficiency of wisdom for courage - he does not state that this wisdom is the art of measurement. In the remaining sections I will explore why he fails to refer explicitly to the metrêtikê technê at this stage, even though he has formerly presented it as the salvation of life and his argument from 358a appears to have established its sufficiency for a good life. In section four, I will discuss Anne Balansard's (2001) suggestion that Socrates does not, in fact, accept technê as a model for aretê, but instead presents it as founded upon the art of the sophists and uses it only to refute the sophists.³ Balansard's argument focuses upon Socrates' use of the suffix -ikos in the language he uses to describe technê – a suffix which Balansard demonstrates

² Based upon the many's view of what aretê entails.

³ Balansard's argument is based on evidence from a range of Socratic dialogues including the *Protagoras*, but she does not refer specifically to the metrêtikê technê. I explore the relevance for the metrêtikê technê of her general line of argument.

was, in fifth century literature, closely connected with the activities and opinions of the sophists. While accepting the sophistic connotations of this suffix I argue that, in the case of the metrêtikê technê, Socrates is not using the suffix to represent the opinions of the sophists but rather to present it as compatible with their art and convince them of its sufficiency for aretê. In fact, the metrêtikê technê has its foundation in the opinion of the many (not of the sophists) and Socrates has to present it very carefully to ensure that the sophists agree to it. The obvious effort he makes to do so indicates that he has a genuine commitment to using it within his argument to establish the sufficiency of wisdom for aretê. This makes it even stranger that he fails to refer to it directly as the conclusion of his argument.

In section five I suggest that Plato's portrayal of Protagoras' reaction to Socrates' argument from 358a throws light upon Socrates' own reluctance to state specifically at the conclusion of this argument that the wisdom that is courage is the metrêtikê technê. Socrates has carefully chosen courage as the aspect of virtue to which he applies the metrêtikê technê because it is the aspect about which Protagoras feels most strongly. Protagoras believes courage is completely different [panu polu diapheron, 349d4 – 5] from all other aspects and that it is the finest [kalliston, 349e5] part of virtue. I will explore how Socrates' presentation of the argument (and of Protagoras' reaction to it) highlights how much Protagoras must give up from his own conception of courage if he is to accept the metrêtikê technê.⁴ He must accept that courage is no more than the possession and application of accurate technical knowledge. Furthermore, he must acknowledge that the 'fineness' of a courageous man rests in nothing more than the correct use of a technique of calculating his own best interests (defined as the greatest amount of pleasure). I would suggest that, far from relishing Protagoras' evident difficulty in accepting this model of aretê, Socrates identifies with Protagoras and shares the same difficulty. He recognises how much he too must give up from own his conception of aretê if he is to gain the practical model of aretê which the metrêtikê technê offers. Socrates demonstrates his sympathy with Protagoras by refusing to state openly that courage is the metrêtikê technê.

At the end of the dialogue, Socrates claims (361a) that the conclusion they have reached about aretê is jeering at them both, because their initial positions have reversed – Socrates has come to realise that aretê is teachable and Protagoras now

⁴ And thus gain the benefits that this will bring for his profession.

believes that it isn't. In section six I suggest that, in making this claim, Socrates implicitly acknowledges that the metrêtikê technê is as much at odds with his own view of what a good life entails as it is with Protagoras' view. It is jeering at him because the object of his search – for a type of wisdom which is sufficient for aretê and can thus be the salvation of our lives - has turned out to be no more than a technical calculation of our self-interests. Socrates is faced with the choice of either abandoning a model which has considerable strengths in terms of its sufficiency for wisdom or abandoning his instinctive sense of what living a good life entails. It is this dilemma which jeers at him at the end of the *Protagoras*.

3.2 Establishing the key premises

When Socrates concludes at 357 that wrongdoing is due to ignorance of the metrêtikê technê, the other sophists agree immediately. Socrates tells us that:

'They were all completely satisfied that it was true.'⁵ (358a5, Taylor, 1991)

Their agreement is easily gained because Socrates has made clear to them (through his conversation with the many) that their professional credibility depends upon it. If the many don't accept that aretê is a technê, then they won't accept it can be taught. Yet if it they believe it can't be taught, they won't pay the sophists to teach it to their children. The metrêtikê technê must be an integral part of the sophists' marketing strategy:

'But because you think that it [wrong action] is something other than error you neither consult these sophists yourselves nor send your sons to them to have them taught this [knowledge of the metrêtikê technê]: you don't believe that it can be taught, so you hang on to your money instead of giving it to them, and as a result you do badly both as private individuals and in public affairs.' (357e4 – 8, Taylor, 1991)

⁵ Plato makes clear (358a1 – 4), however, that this willing agreement is actually expressed by Prodicus and Hippias on behalf of Protagoras and Socrates and then attributed to the whole of the assembled company (358a4); Protagoras does not actually agree to it himself. Thus Plato enables Socrates to secure agreement to the premises which underpin the metrêtikê technê and to proceed with his argument, while distancing Protagoras from this agreement. By establishing this distance, Plato prepares the ground for Protagoras' subsequent resistance of the application of these premises and for his role in highlighting difficulties with the metrêtikê technê which I will discuss in section five of this chapter.

Socrates could rely upon the sophists' ready agreement to the metrêtikê technê – dramatically there is no need for further argument. However, he chooses not to do so but instead systematically outlines the principles upon which the metrêtikê technê has been constructed and asks the sophists to agree to each of these in turn. This serves three purposes. Firstly, it shows that Socrates has not simply bullied the sophists into agreeing to the metrêtikê technê by suggesting that they will be unemployed if they don't. Instead he makes clear to them exactly what they are agreeing to and checks that they are prepared to accept this. Secondly, it marks the formal adoption of principles – which, up to this point, have only been agreed with a hypothetical interlocutor (the many) - by the dialogue's real interlocutors. Finally, it reminds the reader of the principles which underpin the metrêtikê technê and establishes them formally as agreed premises upon which an argument to demonstrate the sufficiency of the metrêtikê technê for aretê can be based.

Premise 1 – Pleasure is the only criterion for a good life

At 358a5 – 6, Socrates asks the sophists about the relationship between pleasure and goodness:

'You agree then, [I said], that what is pleasant is good and what is painful bad?' (Taylor, 1991)

He then clarifies precisely what he is asking them to agree to when, at 358b, he suggests:

'Well, gentlemen, [I said], what about this? Aren't all actions praiseworthy [kalai] which lead to a painless and pleasant life? And isn't praiseworthy [kalon] activity good [agathon] and beneficial [ôphelimon]?' (358b3 – 6, Taylor, 1991)

Here Socrates equates what is pleasant with what is kalon and, then, what is kalon with what is good and . The sophists readily accept this and their acceptance contrasts with Protagoras' earlier assertion (351c1 – 2) that a pleasant life is only good if the pleasures it contains are kalon. Socrates is suggesting that the discussion with the many has now established pleasure as the only criterion for a good life. Taylor translates kalon (in 358b3 – 6) as 'praiseworthy'. His translation implies that pleasure is now being identified with moral goodness or, at least, social propriety. However, even if kalon is translated less specifically as 'fine', the force of Socrates'

premise remains the same – there is only one criterion for a good life and that is pleasure. All value judgements about our actions, whether moral, social or aesthetic (and the language we use to express these judgements), ultimately express the same value – pleasantness.

Stokes (1986, pp. 414 – 5) argues that a stronger doctrine emerged from Socrates' discussion with the many than the one which is presented here. He claims that what actually emerged from the discussion with the many was that 'the pleasant is the *only* good, the painful the *only* bad'. He suggests that a weaker position is presented here and concludes that this is because Socrates sees 'no point in raising sophistic hackles beyond necessity' (p.415). Stokes' argument refers mainly to Socrates' proposition at 358a5 -6, which is certainly weaker than the principle agreed with the many. However, at 358b3 – 6, Socrates builds upon this with the stronger proposition that pleasure is the only value against which a good life can be judged. This does reflect his earlier agreement with the many that pleasure is the only good, although there is a distinct difference in the way Socrates presents this proposition to the sophists. Socrates asked the many to agree that pleasure is the only good in the sense of being the only criterion which motivates them to act and which they can cite as a goal in their lives (emphasising their inability to cite any other goal).⁶ In contrast, Socrates asks the sophists to agree that pleasure is the only good in the sense that it is the only value against which they judge a good life (emphasising that the values they hold are synonymous with it).⁷ Socrates thus refers specifically to the concerns which have been raised by the sophists, rather than relying upon the arguments he used with the many. Nevertheless, it seems surprising that the sophists agree so readily to the reduction of their values to pleasure alone – I discuss this at the end of this section.

Premise 2 – No one willingly fails to do what he knows or believes to be best or willingly does what he knows or believes to be bad.

Next, Socrates establishes with the sophists that, in living their lives, people are consistently motivated to pursue pleasure and will do so in all their actions, whenever it is within their power:⁸

⁶ Responding to the many's claim that they are often driven by pleasure to do wrong.

⁷ Responding to Protagoras' claim (351c1 – 2) that only pleasures which are kalon are good.

⁸ This was established with the many at 354c – e.

'So, if what is pleasant is good, [I said] no one who either knows or believes that something else is better than what he is doing, and is in his power to do, subsequently does the other, when he can do what is better.' (358b – c1, Taylor, 1991)

Conversely, no one will willingly do what he knows or believes to be bad:

'Now surely, [I said], no one freely goes for bad things or things he believes to be bad; it's not, it seems to me, in human nature to be prepared to go for what you think to be bad in preference to what is good.' (358c6 – d1, Taylor, 1991)

Taylor (1991, p.202) points out that the impossibility of acting against one's belief (as opposed to against one's knowledge) was not established during the discussion with the many, although Socrates appears to assume that it was. Taylor suggests two possible reasons for the inclusion of belief in Socrates' summary of the discussion: (i) Plato was actually talking about true belief throughout the dialogue or (ii) Plato had not reached a clear distinction between knowledge and true belief at the time he wrote the *Protagoras*. Taylor assumes, therefore, that Plato has true belief in mind here and is simply identifying true belief with knowledge. He implies that there is no particular significance in the addition of belief to Socrates' original thesis. I would suggest, however, that Socrates' denial of the impossibility of acting against one's belief is an important part of his preparation for his subsequent argument that courage is the metrêtikê technê. In this argument it emerges that both courageous and cowardly men have the motivation to pursue what they believe is good; but only the courageous man has the knowledge to recognise and choose accurately what is, in reality, good. The courageous man has knowledge of what is good, which will consistently enable him to choose accurately the greatest quantity of pleasure and thus to maximise his pleasure over a lifetime. The coward, however, has only belief about the quantity of pleasure which will result from his actions and, in many cases, this belief will prove to be false.⁹ As a result belief is not sufficient to maximise his pleasure over a lifetime and, therefore, not sufficient to enable him to be courageous. A distinction between knowledge and belief will underpin Socrates' conclusion that knowledge is the essence of aretê. At this stage, therefore, it is important for

⁹ I would suggest that Socrates is referring not just, as Taylor suggests, to true belief but to belief as a whole – both true and false.

Socrates to introduce this distinction which was not made sufficiently clear in his conversation with the many.¹⁰

Premise 3 – Wrongdoing is false opinion and aretê is wisdom

Socrates then reintroduces the conclusion¹¹ that wrongdoing is ignorance and aretê is wisdom:

‘Nor is giving in to oneself anything other than *ignorance*, nor controlling oneself anything other than wisdom.’ (358c1 – 3, Taylor, 1991 *amended*)

However, he goes on to clarify that what is meant by ignorance is false opinion:

‘Well now. Is this what you mean by *ignorance*, having false opinions and being mistaken about matters of importance?’ (358c3 – 5, Taylor, 1991, *amended*)

Here, Socrates builds on the distinction between knowledge and opinion and establishes with the sophists that, if we give in to other influences which conflict with what is best for us, then we do not have knowledge but only belief. Opinion on its own will frequently be false and this will result in wrongdoing. The proof of our knowledge is in our actions and choices. If we do not, in living our lives, consistently demonstrate the judgement required to recognise and choose what is best for us, then we do not have wisdom but only opinion.

Premise 4 – Pleasure and pain can be judged only in terms of quantity

Finally, Socrates establishes that the *quantity* of pleasure or pain in their lives is the only criterion the sophists can use to judge the goodness (pleasantness) of their lives. Pleasure and pain cannot be measured in any other way:

‘And when you are forced to choose one of two evils nobody will choose the greater when he can have the lesser. Isn’t that so?’ (358d2 - 4, Taylor, 1991)

¹⁰ Although it is entirely compatible with this conversation. The many accept that they pursue what is good in *all* their actions – this would include actions based on belief as well as on knowledge.

¹¹ The conclusion which was reached at 357c6 – d3:

‘Well, if this experience isn’t being overcome by pleasure, what is it then? What do you call it? Tell us. If we had straightaway said “Error” you would have laughed at us: but now, if you laugh at us you will be laughing at yourselves.’

As discussed in the previous chapter, Socrates has emphasised this principle at length in his conversation with the many. He now gets the sophists to agree to it, focussing on the measurement of evil (pain). This leads conveniently into a discussion of the nature of fear (from 358d), which Socrates suggests can be defined as the expectation of evil.

The sophists agree to each of the above premises without challenging or questioning Socrates' statements. This could be seen as dramatically unconvincing, and it may appear that Socrates is really delivering a monologue at this stage, with the sophists as no more than token interlocutors. Socrates is asking them to abandon any values they have, other than the quantity of pleasure in their lives,¹² and yet they accept this without resistance. It is possible that this is due to Socrates' claim that their profession depends upon their accepting the metrêtikê technê. However, it also depends upon their ability to appeal to potential pupils and their families – to whom the model of a good life which the metrêtikê technê entails would seem entirely alien. Admittedly, Socrates has demonstrated how the many (who were initially concerned about acknowledging that they were hedonists) can be convinced by this type of hedonism. Nevertheless, if the sophists only agree to the premises which underpin the metrêtikê technê because of an implicit threat by Socrates, then his subsequent argument (which builds upon these premises) will be built on an unsound foundation.

Another possibility is that the sophists genuinely share the many's inability to cite any basis for their actions other than the maximisation of pleasure over a lifetime. To argue that they accept the metrêtikê technê on this basis, however, would be to attribute a surprising lack of resourcefulness to the sophists, particularly to Prodicus who has demonstrated his ability to articulate minute distinctions on any possible subject area. It is highly unlikely that he can't suggest more than one source of motivation for his actions.

A more reasonable explanation for the sophists' willing acceptance of the metrêtikê technê is that they are actually made more comfortable (rather than threatened by) the way Socrates presents the proposition and, particularly, his suggestion (358a6 – b2) that what is kalon and ôphelimon will always be pleasant. It is credible that the sophists are willing to accept, in principle, a form of hedonism where they can take

¹² And, furthermore, in the lives of those whom they teach.

pleasure in what is kalon and which appears to resolve any conflict in their values. In the final argument of the dialogue, Socrates will ‘unpack’ precisely what this form of hedonism commits them to and, in doing so, makes clear the difficulties not only for the sophists but also for himself. In the meantime, however, he presents hedonism in its most palatable form for the sophists.¹³ Russell (2000) takes this view and offers a convincing explanation for the sophists’ willingness to accept the metrêtikê technê. He suggests (p.329 ff.) that their agreement is based upon a version of hedonism which offers pleasure and pain as an explanation for the rightness and wrongness of how they live their lives, Russell calls this ‘explanatory hedonism’. It does not require the many to change what they believe is right or wrong, but instead offers pleasantness as the explanation for their belief. Thus it makes it possible for a traditional account of virtue to be aligned with hedonism while offering a practical and teachable model of a good life. I would suggest that 358b3 – 6 is the point where Socrates demonstrates this alignment and suggests that everything which is good (kalon and ôphelimon) is good *because* it is pleasant. This leaves open the possibility that the sophists and their pupils, by virtue of their good character, will naturally take pleasure in the ‘right’ things and so their value system will remain intact.

While I accept Russell’s interpretation of the sophist’s co-operation, I disagree with his overall argument that the metrêtikê technê is not proposed by Socrates as a serious model of aretê, but is an ad hominem strategy (sufficient to convince the sophists) to refute Protagoras’ assertions about the nature of courage. He suggests (p.312) that ‘Socrates’ arguments are best treated as aimed primarily at the refutation of Protagoras’ assertions, and not primarily at the establishment of Socratic doctrine.’ I will show in section five how Socrates actually draws attention to the weaknesses of the model when it is tested against Protagoras’ view of courage. His doing so would be hard to explain if the model is entirely ad hominem.

¹³ By referring to Prodicus’ precise distinction, Socrates invites the sophists to interpret pleasure in whatever way makes them feel most comfortable: ‘You agree, then, I said, that what is pleasant is good and what is painful bad. I leave aside our friend Prodicus’ distinction of names; for whether you call it “pleasant” or “delightful” or “enjoyable”, or however you care to apply such names, my dear Prodicus, give your answer according to the sense of my question.’ (358a6 – b2, Taylor, 1991). This clearly does set the sophists’ minds at rest and contributes to getting their agreement: ‘Prodicus laughed, and indicated his agreement, and so did the rest.’ (358b2 – 3, Taylor, 1991)

3.3 Applying the Premises

At 358d Socrates returns to the subject of courage, which he had abandoned at 351b2. He begins by agreeing with the sophists a definition of fear as 'an expectation of evil' (358d6 – 7). Frede (in Lombardo & Bell1992) points out that Socrates here characterises fear 'as a certain kind of belief, namely, as the expectation of something bad' (p.xxx). On Frede's interpretation, Socrates is suggesting that, whenever we act in accordance with our passions (in this case, our fears), we act in accordance with our rational appraisal of what is going to happen. Frede argues that this account of fear is an essential basis for Socrates' subsequent denial of akrasia. It rules out the possibility (in the context of courage) that our passions lead us to act against our knowledge or beliefs and presents them instead as part of a rational decision-making process. Through his definition of fear, Socrates prevents the sophists from re-introducing the many's suggestion that their emotions lead them to act against their knowledge of what is best (courageous). In doing so, Socrates lays the foundation for an intellectualist account of aretê and of wrongdoing, based on a distinction between knowledge and belief (rather than between reason and emotion). As Frede points out: 'Socrates does want to claim that knowledge or wisdom provides one with a special ability or strength that mere belief does not' (p.xxx).

Having established this definition of fear, Socrates systematically applies each of the premises to which they have just agreed, in order to reach the conclusion that courage is the art of measurement. Furthermore, he emphasises that his argument will use these premises, by introducing the argument with the proviso that 'if what has just been said is true' (358e2). This creates a direct link between the argument which follows and the premises which have just been agreed.

Application of Premise 2:

No one willingly does what he fears

Firstly, Socrates applies the second premise – that no one willingly does what he knows or believes to be bad. He suggests that, as a result of this, no one will willingly do what he fears:

'The point is this. If what has just been said is true, will any man be willing to go for what he fears, when he can go for what he doesn't fear. Or is that impossible, according to what we have agreed? For if anyone fears something, it was agreed that

he thinks it bad; and no one who thinks anything bad goes for it or takes it of his own free will.' (358e2 – 6, Taylor, 1991)

In applying the premise, Socrates uses their agreed definition of fear as the expectation of evil. However, while our expectation could be founded on either knowledge or belief (and the definition leaves either possibility open), it is noticeable that Socrates, in applying the definition, focuses on expectation which is founded upon belief (hêgeisthai, 358e5). Thus he uses only one part of the earlier premise - which referred to the role of both belief *and* knowledge in driving our actions. So, why does Socrates not refer to knowledge at this stage of the argument? I would suggest that, at this stage, Socrates is more concerned with embedding a purely intellectualist account of our actions. Before going on to explore what sets the courageous man apart from the coward, Socrates wants to make the point that both courageous and cowardly men will pursue what they believe is good. In doing so, he rules out any account of our actions other than one based upon reason.

Application of Premise 1:

Courageous actions are pleasant

At 359e, Protagoras cites going to war as an example of an action of a courageous man. He agrees with Socrates that his is a praiseworthy (kalon) action. This enables Socrates to draw the conclusion that courageous actions are pleasant:

- (i) 'So, if it's praiseworthy, we agreed previously that it is good; for we agreed that all praiseworthy actions are good.' (359e5 – 6, Taylor 1991)
- (ii) 'Well, now, I said, if it's praiseworthy and good, is it also pleasant?' (360a2 – 3, Taylor, 1991)

These statements apply, in the context of courage, the first premise agreed with the sophists in Socrates' summary of his discussion with the many – that pleasure is the only criterion for a good life. So, courageous actions, because they are good, are pleasant.

Santas (1979, p.171) raises an objection to this stage of the argument. He says: 'Some of the statements in these two sub-arguments appear preposterous, at least in

the sense of being obviously false. Possibly some wars or some goings-to-war are honourable, and possibly some are good, but is it even plausible to maintain that all are? Worse yet, is it even plausible to maintain that any war or going-to-war is pleasant?’

Santas then concedes that this may seem slightly less preposterous a statement in the light of the many’s commitment to the psychological and ethical hedonism on which this argument is based. However, he does not acknowledge that Socrates has taken the trouble to gain the agreement both of the many (354e8 – 355a5) and of the sophists (358b3 – 6) to pleasure as the only criterion of goodness. As a result, his statement that war is pleasant is a valid inference from an agreed premise. Whether it seems ‘obviously false’ is a separate issue which raises the question of what we mean by pleasant. It could be argued that, given an appropriate definition of pleasant, going to war could be pleasant. Admittedly, this is a question which Socrates sidesteps here, but Santas’ criticism seems over-harsh in the light of the secure foundation which Socrates has built for his claim that courageous actions are pleasant.

Application of Premise 4:

Both the coward and the courageous man will always pursue the greatest quantity of pleasure in their actions

Socrates then applies the fourth premise which he has agreed with the sophists, namely that pleasure and pain can be judged only in terms of quantity. He makes Protagoras concede that the actions of both the coward and the courageous man will always be based upon a judgement about the greatest quantity of pleasure in their lives – as it has already been established that quantity is the only way in which what is good (pleasant) can be judged.

‘So cowards are unwilling, in full knowledge of the facts, to go for what is more praiseworthy and better and pleasanter?’

But if we agree to that, he said, we shall contradict our previously agreed conclusions.

And what about the courageous man? Does he not go for what is more praiseworthy and better and pleasanter?’ (360a4 – 8, Taylor, 1991)

Application of Premise 3:

Cowardice is Ignorance and Courage is Wisdom

From 360b, Socrates begins to explore what sets the coward apart from the courageous man. He suggests that the difference is in the nature of their fear and confidence:

'Now in general, when a courageous man is afraid, his fear is not something disgraceful, nor his confidence when he is confident?

That's right, he said.

And if not disgraceful, are they not praiseworthy?

He agreed.

And if praiseworthy, good as well?

Yes.

Now by contrast the fear and confidence of cowards, madmen, and the foolhardy are disgraceful?'

He agreed.' (360a9 – b6, Taylor, 1991)

Here, Socrates appears to award the state of mind which drives the courageous man's and the coward's actions with the character of the actions themselves. So, the fear or confidence which drives the coward to do what is disgraceful is itself described as disgraceful or praiseworthy. Santas (1979, pp.175 – 6) questions this description of fear and confidence, both in terms of what it means and in terms of its value in the argument. I would suggest, however, that this description does have a valuable role in the dialogue. Here, Socrates builds on the principle established at 358d – 7 - that fear forms part of our rational decision-making process - by explaining how this helps us understand the difference between courage and cowardice. Where the courageous man does something praiseworthy or the coward does something disgraceful it is, in each case, because of a rational appraisal of what is going to happen which manifests itself in either the fear or the confidence that drives their actions. Having reinforced the view that both cowardice and courage have their basis in a rational decision about what is to be feared, Socrates establishes that the only possible difference between the two is that the former is founded upon ignorance about what is to be feared and the latter is founded upon knowledge.

'So cowardice proves to be *ignorance* about what is to be feared and what isn't.'
(360c6 -7, Taylor, 1991 *amended*)

'So wisdom about what is to be feared and what isn't is courage, since it is the opposite of *ignorance* about that?' (360d4 – 5, Taylor, 1991 *amended*)

This conclusion applies the third of the premises agreed with the sophists, namely that wrongdoing is ignorance (resulting from false opinion) and aretê is wisdom. Courage has turned out to be the wisdom to judge accurately which actions will result in the greatest pleasure, and we know, from the earlier conversation with the many, that this wisdom is the metrêtikê technê. It is a conclusion that has been validly derived from premises which have been clearly agreed with the sophists. Socrates has tested his proposed model of wisdom against a real example of aretê and it has stood up to the test. Yet Socrates does not refer directly to the metrêtikê technê and his failure to do so, which contrasts with his earlier claim that it represents the salvation of life for the many, appears to have gone unnoticed by most commentators. Protagoras' obvious disgust at the conclusion and his refusal to agree to it is apparent, but the fact that Socrates cannot bring himself to express openly the type of wisdom that they are identifying with courage implies that he has just as much difficulty with the conclusion as Protagoras. Socrates refuses to acknowledge openly the metrêtikê technê as sufficient for aretê in exactly the same way that Protagoras does and in the following sections I will explore why this is the case.

3.4 Technê and Sophistry

One possible explanation for Socrates' failure to acknowledge openly the metrêtikê technê as the conclusion of his search for the type of wisdom which is sufficient for aretê is put forward by Balansard (2001). Balansard denies that, even in his earliest dialogues, Plato is seriously proposing technê as a model for aretê. She suggests that the claim by many commentators that he does¹⁴ is founded upon an assumption that Plato is presenting technê as a rational and productive art which is synonymous with epistêmê. Balansard argues that this assumption is wrong and is the result of undue influence both from our own modern view of technology and from the ancient Greek conception of the dêmiourgos. We assume that the technê to which Socrates refers has the characteristics of modern technology (e.g. engineering) – which uses a determinate process to achieve a desired end result or product. In addition, we assume that it has the characteristics of the manual trades of the ancient Greek

¹⁴ Luc Brisson, in his preface to Balansard (2001), cites Irwin (1972 & 1996) as an example.

dēmiourgos, as presented by Homer or Hesiod, and look to these as a basis for interpreting Socrates' arguments.

Balansard argues that the concept of technê gradually spread beyond its original sphere (the world of the dēmiourgos) and, by the fifth century, had also been appropriated by the sophists to refer to their art. She claims (chapter 2) that this appropriation is demonstrated by a development in the vocabulary of technê and in particular, in the development of forms of technê ending in -ikos.¹⁵ Firstly, Balansard draws attention to the rapid increase in the use of the suffix -ikos in the second half of the fifth century - particular in those authors whom we recognise as particularly influenced by or interested in the style or ideas of the sophists (e.g. Euripides, Thucydides, Isocrates and Aristophanes). Balansard suggests (p.45) that 'La diffusion de ces formes est en effet concurrente du développement de la sophistique et d'une nouvelle pratique intellectuelle.' Aristophanes (*Knights*, 1375 – 1380) is cited as an example of the direct association of the suffix -ikos with the sophists. Secondly, Balansard claims that this general development of the use of the suffix was reflected specifically in the vocabulary of technê where 'l'adjectif feminine en ikê se développe pour designer les arts et les techniques' (p38). Again, she demonstrates how this use increased rapidly in the fifth century and is particularly prevalent amongst the pre-Socratic philosophers.

According to Balansard, Plato is not only aware of, but actively makes use of, this development in the vocabulary of technê. Sometimes he uses ordinary common nouns to describe technai and other times he uses derivatives of these nouns, ending in -ikos. Balansard suggests that there is a clear pattern as to which of these two forms he chooses - 'les formes en ikos sont en effet des formes plus sophistiquées' (p.45). Her argument is that when, in discussing technê, Plato aims to reflect the point of view of the sophists, he uses 'sophistic' vocabulary. Where technê is simply referred to within the discussion (but with no particular view point conveyed) Plato uses straightforward common nouns. So, for example, at the start of the *Protagoras* (318d7 – e5), Protagoras lists what other sophists claim to teach¹⁶ and, in

¹⁵ She makes a distinction (p.38) between the use of the suffix as the derivative of proper nouns (specifically, place names) to designate ethnic identity/origin (e.g. Attikos, Dōrikos etc.) and its use as the derivative of a wide range of common nouns. The former use, she argues, was present in Greek literature from the outset, whereas the latter developed slowly until the fifth century when it increased significantly.

¹⁶ Arithmetic, astronomy, geometry, music and literature.

doing so, does not use the -ikos suffix.¹⁷ This conveys the fact that this aspect of the sophists' teaching is entirely conservative and uncontroversial – it does not set the sophists apart from other teachers or from the views of ordinary citizens about what technê embraces. However, when Protagoras describes his own role as a teacher of the art of being a good citizen, he refers to this art as the 'politikê technê' (319a4). In doing so he makes a controversial claim to teach something that would not normally be regarded as a technê. According to Balansard, the -ikos suffix reflects his controversial opinion that living well is a teachable art: 'La techné que lui, Protagoras, enseigne, présente seule un caractère novateur.' (p.43)

In chapter 3 of her book, Balansard argues that Plato also uses the -ikos suffix to demonstrate that the sophists regard their own technê as very different from that of the dêmiourgos. She refers, for example (pp. 92 – 4), to *Protagoras* 322b, where Protagoras (within his myth of the creation of mankind) makes a distinction between the 'dêmiourgikê technê', which was sufficient to provide mankind with food, and the 'politikê technê', which they needed in order to be able to live together as a community and protect themselves against attack by wild beasts. Balansard suggests that the distinction here is between a manual, productive technê, which is the province of craftsmen, and a higher, non-productive art which is the province of the sophists. Here, the -ikos suffix is used to convey the sophists' view of their art as a 'liberal' art which is not concerned with producing a particular end product or result but with living well.

Balansard does not specifically discuss the *Protagoras*' model of aretê as the metrêtikê technê. Her general argument, however, is that, throughout Plato's work, the -ikos suffix is used to convey the opinion or perspective of the sophists and, furthermore, forms an integral part of his refutation of the sophists' claims to aretê: 'Mais la technê s'avère aussi dans son ancrage sophistique: l'interlocuteur pour qui la technê fait sens, car elle est instrument de pouvoir, c'est d'abord le sophiste. Il faut donc rendre à César ce qui appartient à César: au sophiste, la prétention d'enseigner l'aretê'. (p.316). If we apply Balansard's argument to the metrêtikê technê, then it would appear that Socrates is not proposing it as a serious model of aretê, but as an integral part of the sophists' claim to teach politikê technê. It is an illustration of what

¹⁷ Except in the case of music (mousikê) which, Balansard argues, is an exception to the rule and should be treated like a common noun.

their claim to teach aretê entails – it reduces a good life to a selfish calculation of how we can maximise our own pleasures.

Yet, the ‘ancrage’ (or foundation) of the metrêtikê technê is very clearly in the opinion of the many, and not in sophistry. Socrates has demonstrated at length how its existence is required by the many’s inability to cite anything except the quantity of pleasure as the measure of a good life. To get the sophists to agree to it, Socrates has to present the hedonism on which it is founded in its most palatable form – as a form of hedonism where they can take pleasure in what is kalon and which appears to resolve any conflict in their values between what is good and what is pleasant. While their acceptance of this model of aretê has advantages for them, it is misleading to suggest that it is founded upon or represents their opinion. Furthermore, it has far more in common with the technê of the dêmiourgos than the ‘liberal’ art of the sophists. Socrates has demonstrated that the art of measurement is a clearly defined rational and objective process which achieves a specific end product – the largest quantity of pleasure. If Socrates is presenting the metrêtikê technê as something which directly reflects the opinion of the sophists or the nature of their teaching, then he is trying to return to Caesar what never belonged to Caesar in the first place.

I would suggest instead that the ‘sophistic’ language used serves to persuade the sophists of the sufficiency of the metrêtikê technê for the type of wisdom they profess to teach. Socrates uses the -ikos suffix in order to present it as a liberal art of the kind they would identify with and to suggest that it is compatible with their values. Here the -ikos suffix is not so much reflecting the opinion of the sophists as courting their support. This interpretation is supported by the care Socrates has taken to present each of the principles that underpin the metrêtikê technê in a way that is acceptable to them. In making an effort to gain their agreement, Socrates suggests that he has a genuine commitment to using the metrêtikê technê within his argument to establish the sufficiency of wisdom for aretê. It is a genuine sketch of wisdom not a tool of refutation. Yet this still leaves us with the question of why Socrates fails to refer to it directly as the conclusion of his argument.

3.5 Protagoras' reluctance to accept the metrêtikê technê

Protagoras' reaction to Socrates' attempts to apply the metrêtikê technê to courage throws light upon Socrates' own reluctance to pronounce the metrêtikê technê as the conclusion of their argument. Plato's characterisation of Protagoras during the final argument highlights just how much Protagoras must give up from his conception of courage if he is to accept the sufficiency of the metrêtikê technê for courage. I will argue in section six that, in exploring Protagoras' reaction to the metrêtikê technê, Socrates comes to recognise that it presents just as many problems for him as it does for Protagoras.

Protagoras' conception of courage

Plato's choice of courage as the aspect of aretê to which Socrates applies the metrêtikê technê (in order to demonstrate the sufficiency of wisdom for aretê) is a careful choice, designed to highlight the difficulty which Protagoras has with the metrêtikê technê. At the beginning of their discussion about courage, Protagoras makes clear that it is the aspect of aretê which he believes is completely different [panu polu diapheron, 349d4 – 5] from all others. He claims that this is demonstrated by the fact that one can have courage while lacking all the other virtues (349d6 – 8). While Protagoras does not articulate exactly what he believes sets courage apart, it is very clear that he does not accept that it is synonymous with wisdom (or with any other part of aretê). In fact, Protagoras thinks that every part of aretê is different from the others, but he feels this most strongly and articulates it most clearly in the case of courage. In the case of courage he is not prepared to give in to Socrates' attempt to demonstrate its unity with the other virtues (as he is with other aspects of aretê about which he feels less strongly) and from 350c – 351b he raises a detailed objection to the logic of the argument which Socrates has put forward. At the conclusion of this he states clearly his belief (351b1 – 2) that courage, as opposed to daring [tharsos], comes from 'a good natural condition [phusis] and nurture of the soul [eutrophia]' and cannot, therefore, be reduced to wisdom alone:

'For daring results both from skill and from animal boldness and madness, like capability, but courage from a good natural condition and nurture of the soul' (351a7 – b2, Taylor, 1991)

Whether or not Protagoras' objection to the logic of Socrates' argument is valid, 351a7 – b2 represents a clear statement of his position about courage – that there is more to it than technê. Underpinning Protagoras' conception of courage is a view of a good life as a life in which all our actions are kalon. At 351c7 – d7 he emphasises that what is kalon is not identical with what is pleasant – a pleasant life is only good if we take pleasure in (i.e. act in pursuit of) things which are kala.

'So to have a pleasant life is good, and to have an unpleasant life bad?
[Protagoras] Provided one takes pleasure in praiseworthy [kalois] things.' (351b7 – c2, Taylor, 1991)

It is likely that Protagoras still has courage in mind when he makes this point (as Socrates raises the question in the middle of their discussion of courage) and so it throws further light upon his view of courage. Protagoras believes that truly courageous actions require us to go beyond a rational calculation of our best interests (in this case represented by what is most pleasant for us) and to act purely in pursuit of what is kalon. I would suggest that, for Protagoras, this is what sets courage apart from the other aspects of aretê and what makes it panu polu diapheron. More than any other aspect of aretê, courage¹⁸ requires us to go beyond what we calculate as being good for us and to do what is right regardless of this. As a result, more than any other aspect of aretê it cannot be reduced to wisdom.

Protagoras' low profile

In asking Protagoras to agree to the metrêtikê technê, Socrates is, therefore, challenging his firm belief that to kalon (the value by which Protagoras judges the whole of his life) is not identical with pleasantness. In doing so he is challenging Protagoras' whole conception of aretê and, particularly, of courage. By giving Protagoras a very low profile within the sophists' acceptance of the metrêtikê technê, Plato indicates that Protagoras has not been convinced, through the conversation with the many, that pleasure is, in fact, the only standard by which a good life can be judged.

Immediately after the discussion with the many (from which a good life emerges as the metrêtikê technê), Socrates asks Hippias and Prodicus (but not Protagoras)

¹⁸ Which Protagoras regards as the finest [kalliston, 349e5] part of virtue.

whether they accept the truth of what he is saying. Socrates then reports to his unnamed companion that 'They were all [hapasin] completely satisfied that it was true' (358a4 – 5). 'All' seems a strange way of referring to Hippias and Prodicus, and Socrates is probably referring to the assembled company. Protagoras' agreement, however, is not specifically referred to and it is debatable whether it can be assumed. Socrates then asks the sophists (358a5 – b3) to confirm that they now accept that what is pleasant is good and what is painful bad (and reminds Prodicus not to be too pedantic about it). He reports that 'Prodicus laughed, and indicated his agreement, and so did the rest [hoi alloi]' (358b2 – 3, Taylor, 1991). Again, it is not clear who 'the rest' includes, and Protagoras' personal agreement is noticeable by its absence.

By giving Protagoras a low profile, Socrates is able to gain agreement to the metrêtikê technê and thus earn it a valid position within his argument, while highlighting that Protagoras' is reluctant to agree to this model.

Characterisation of Protagoras in the final argument

When Socrates begins to apply the metrêtikê technê to the question of courage, he no longer speaks to the sophists collectively but brings Protagoras back into the conversation (359a) and forces him to actively resume his role as the main interlocutor. Protagoras willingly agrees to those stages of the argument which he can genuinely accept. He is happy, for example, to accept at 359e that all praiseworthy [kalas] actions are good:

'That's true; I remain of that opinion.' (359e7 – 8, Taylor, 1991)

But when he is asked whether going to war is, by virtue of being kalon, pleasant he replies:

'Well, that's what was agreed [hômologêtai].' (360a3, Taylor, 1991)

Here, Protagoras' use of the third person form of homologeô distances him from what was agreed and reminds us that, while the other sophists agreed to the equivalence of pleasure and to kalon, Protagoras did not (unless we count his silence as agreement). Socrates is now asking Protagoras to accept this equivalence by agreeing that, if going to war is courageous, it will, necessarily, be pleasant. This is entirely at odds with Protagoras' conception of courage which is not identifiable with

our self-interest (pleasure). Through the impersonal hômologêtai, Protagoras registers his objection and distances himself from this, to him, alien model of courage. The scenario of going to war is carefully chosen by Socrates to highlight Protagoras' difficulty – the courage displayed in war is, for Protagoras, a classic example of how courage requires us to set aside any rational calculation of our own self-interest.

In the remainder of the argument, Protagoras makes clear that he accepts the equivalence of pleasure and to kalon only to avoid contradicting what, collectively, the sophists have agreed:¹⁹

'But if we agree to that,²⁰ he said, we shall contradict the previously agreed conclusions.' (360a5 - 6, my translation)²¹

He emphasises that his agreement is enforced rather than willing: 'I have [anagkê]²² to agree, he said.' (360a8, Taylor, 1991)

As Socrates moves steadily towards the identification of courage with the metrêtikê technê, Protagoras can no longer bear to speak and will only nod in reply (360c7, 360d3) and then he can hardly bear [mogis] to nod. (360d3 – 4). When Socrates concludes that courage is wisdom about what is to be feared (that is, about what is pleasant and unpleasant), Protagoras cannot bring himself even to nod in agreement. He tries to withdraw from the discussion and tells Socrates to carry on himself (360d8). When pressed by Socrates, he accepts that ignorance precludes courage, but this is a weaker conclusion than the one Socrates has been trying to reach - that wisdom alone is sufficient for courage. Furthermore, Protagoras indicates that he is only agreeing because of the principles the sophists agreed to collectively.

¹⁹ And perhaps also because Protagoras has in common with the other sophists the need to protect his livelihood by agreeing to Socrates' argument.

²⁰ i.e. that cowards can be acting in full knowledge of what is kallion/better/ more pleasant.

²¹ My translation differs slightly from Taylor's here – he translates 'tas emprosthen homologias' as 'our previously agreed conclusions'. Protagoras doesn't actually say that they are 'our conclusions' but only that they are 'the conclusions'. In fact, he didn't agree to these conclusions, although collectively the sophists did and so Protagoras feels obliged to go along with them.

²² Anagkê could be interpreted as referring to logical necessity (i.e. the logic of the argument requires his agreement) but when interpreted in the light of Protagoras' subsequent refusal to speak, it clearly implies that he feels that his arm is being twisted.

'I see that you insist, Socrates, he said, that I must answer. So, I'll oblige you; I declare that from what we have agreed it seems to me impossible.' (360e4 – 5, Taylor, 1991)

Through his characterisation of Protagoras, Plato shows just how much the metrêtikê technê requires Protagoras to give up from his conception of courage. Protagoras believes that courage epitomises how living a good life goes beyond a rational calculation of our best interests. The metrêtikê technê has reduced courage - the aspect of virtue which is most important to him - to a technical calculation about the amount of pleasure resulting from our actions. This is a parody of what Protagoras believes courage truly is and he refuses to accept it as a model of aretê.

3.6 Socrates' dilemma

It is easy to assume that Socrates is enjoying Protagoras' evident difficulty with accepting this model of aretê. Socrates may appear to be taunting Protagoras by applying the metrêtikê technê to Protagoras' 'favourite' virtue and by making him agree that examples of great bravery displayed in war boil down, in fact, to no more than the pursuit of pleasure. This would support an ad hominem account of the metrêtikê technê as a device used by Socrates' purely to undermine Protagoras' claim to teach aretê. On this account, Socrates is showing Protagoras the type of aretê he must accept if his claim that it is a teachable technê is to hold. Socrates knows that Protagoras cannot accept this and will, therefore, be forced to abandon his claim to teach aretê.

I would suggest, however, that Socrates applies the metrêtikê technê within their discussion of courage, not in order to taunt Protagoras, but to ensure that the metrêtikê technê is stringently tested and evaluated. He achieves this by 'testing' it on (applying it to) the aspect of aretê about which his interlocutor feels most strongly. By doing this Socrates fulfils the commitment which he made at 357b5 – c1 to evaluate the metrêtikê technê and check whether it is 'safe' for us to use in living our lives, as he advised Hippocrates to do in the opening frame of the *Protagoras*. There is evidence that, far from enjoying Protagoras' difficulties with the metrêtikê technê, Socrates identifies and sympathises with them. He recognises how much he too must give up from own his conception of aretê if he is to gain the practical model of aretê which the metrêtikê technê offers. Socrates demonstrates his own difficulty with the metrêtikê technê by avoiding stating openly that it is identical with courage, even

though his argument has established his right to do so. If Socrates was aiming to make Protagoras as uncomfortable as possible, surely he would not have hesitated to emphasise that courage has turned out to be no more than a technique for calculating pleasure.

At the end of the dialogue, Socrates claims (361a) that the conclusion they have reached about aretê is jeering at them both, because their initial positions have reversed – Socrates has come to believe that aretê is teachable and Protagoras now believes that it isn't. Their failure to reach agreement with each other reflects the dilemma that has emerged for each of them individually. Their search for a type of wisdom which is sufficient for aretê and which can thus be the salvation of life has led them to an art of measuring quantities of pleasure. In doing so, it has presented them both with a stark choice between:

- (i) accepting a model – the metrêtikê technê - which has considerable strengths in terms of its sufficiency for aretê²³ and its 'teachability';
- (ii) maintaining their instinctive sense of what living a good [kalon] life entails.

In reality, it is this personal dilemma (reflected dramatically in their failure to agree with each other) that jeers at both Socrates and Protagoras equally at the end of the dialogue. In the next chapter I suggest that Socrates attempts to rise to this challenge in the *Gorgias* and begins to sketch an entirely different picture of aretê as a state of order in the soul. This sketch, however, fails to offer the strengths that the metrêtikê technê can provide and so the metrêtikê technê continues to jeer at him.

²³ In chapter two, I argued that Socrates makes clear that the metrêtikê technê offers three main strengths with regard to sufficiency for aretê:

- (i) it is founded upon an objective truth about the nature of a good life;
- (ii) it offers an account (founded in hedonism) of our motivation to act consistently upon our knowledge of what it is right to do;
- (iii) it brings determinacy and practical accuracy to the decisions we make about how we live.

Sketching the ‘Sôtêria Tou Biou’

Plato and the Art of Measurement

Chapter 4 - Challenging the metrêtikê technê

(*Gorgias* 447a – 506e)

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will explore how, in the *Gorgias*, Socrates attributes to one of his interlocutors – Callicles – a model of aretê as the ability to maximise pleasure in our lives. Socrates reaches the conclusion that this model is untenable and I will argue that this conclusion has direct implications for the model of aretê as the metrêtikê technê which Socrates proposed in the *Protagoras* and which he presented as the ‘salvation of life’.

In section two I will argue that the model of aretê which Socrates attributes to Callicles has the same key features as the *Protagoras*’ metrêtikê technê. Calliclean aretê, like the metrêtikê technê, is concerned with achieving the greatest quantity of pleasure in our lives and is founded upon the principle that all pleasure is good. In one respect, however, Callicles develops the account of aretê provided by the metrêtikê technê - by emphasising that pleasure occurs in the *process* of satisfying one’s desires, rather than in the *state* of desire satisfaction. Callicles demonstrates that this account of pleasure is required by any model of aretê which is concerned with maximising pleasure in our lives. His argument is as relevant to the metrêtikê technê as to Callicles’ own account of aretê and, in this respect, the *Gorgias* develops and adds detail to the *Protagoras*’ sketch of aretê. In doing so, however, it also lays the foundation for one of Socrates’ main arguments against it (*Gorgias* 495e – 497d).

In section three I will show how Socrates demonstrates that Callicles is the best possible advocate for a model of aretê as the maximisation of pleasure. He makes clear that Callicles’ hedonistic account of aretê is an integral part of his firmly held conviction that a good life is nothing more than a life successfully devoted to satisfying one’s own desires. Furthermore, Callicles (unlike Gorgias and Polus who

precede him as interlocutors) is free of any sense of shame about his beliefs which could inhibit his ability to defend them well. Socrates thus emphasises that this model of aretê is being put to the test with representation by the best possible advocate – if Callicles cannot defend it, then no-one can.

In section four I will examine Socrates' arguments against Callicles' account of aretê and suggest that he puts forward two valid arguments which are derived directly from premises to which Callicles has agreed. Firstly, Socrates argues (495e – 497d) that Callicles' hedonistic view of a good life actually requires the compresence of good (pleasant) and bad (painful) states – in order to maximise our pleasure, we must also maximise our pain. Secondly, he demonstrates (497e – 499a) that Calliclean hedonism requires him to value human qualities (cowardice and ignorance) which, according to his own account of aretê, are bad. Taken together, the two arguments suggest that Callicles is proposing a contradictory account of a good life, in which living the kind of life he claims to be good depends upon both living and valuing the kind of life he believes to be bad.

In section five I will explore why Socrates is now prepared to argue directly against a model of aretê which, at the end of the *Protagoras*, was jeering at both Socrates and Protagoras from a position of strength. I suggest that Socrates now has a different model in mind - a model which he introduces immediately after his attack on Calliclean hedonism when he proposes an account of aretê as order of the soul (506e1 – 5). It is a model which he believes can overcome the weaknesses of the metrêtikê technê while retaining its strengths – it represents a refinement of this sketch rather than the abandonment of it.

My interpretation of Plato's treatment of aretê in the *Protagoras* and the *Gorgias* leads me to support those commentators who date the *Gorgias* as the later of the two dialogues.¹ Whether or not this is correct, however, the principal conclusion of my analysis is that there is a close and complementary relationship between the treatment of hedonism in the *Protagoras* and the *Gorgias* and that, taken together, the two dialogues present a richer picture of Socratic hedonism and its relationship with aretê than they do separately. Both dialogues paint a picture of a model of aretê founded on maximisation of pleasure but each picture is strikingly different. The

¹ On the basis that, in the *Gorgias*, Socrates explores in depth and challenges a model of aretê which, in the *Protagoras*, he is prepared to use as the basis of his argument while only hinting at its weaknesses.

Protagoras depicts the model as the 'salvation of life' whereas the *Gorgias* draws attention to its weaknesses. The *Protagoras* emphasises the strengths of such a model - its convincing account of our motivation to live a good life and its objective basis for determining how we should live - whereas the *Gorgias* highlights the practical difficulties which must be addressed if this model is to survive.

4.2 Calliclean Aretê

From *Gorgias* 481b, Callicles replaces Polus as Socrates' interlocutor in a discussion about the nature of rhetoric and, more specifically, its relationship with justice. From Callicles' presentation of his views on the nature of justice, a model of aretê emerges which has the same key features as the *Protagoras*' metrêtikê technê in that:

- it is founded upon hedonism;
- it is concerned with maximising pleasure over a life-time;
- maximisation of pleasure is achieved by a judgement about the quantity of pleasure to be gained from our actions;
- all pleasure is regarded as good.

In one respect, however, Callicles clarifies and develops the *Protagoras*' account of aretê - by emphasising that pleasure occurs in the *process* of satisfying one's desires, rather than in the *state* of desire satisfaction.

In this section I will discuss each of the key features of Calliclean aretê:

(i) Calliclean aretê is founded upon hedonism

When, from 488b, Socrates explores what Callicles means by the justice of nature [phusis], it gradually becomes apparent that Callicles' view of what a good life entails is founded upon hedonism. In a long speech (from 482c4 ff.), Callicles has introduced a distinction between the false justice of convention [nomos] and the true justice of nature [phusis]. In this speech he claims that Socrates has shamed Polus into agreeing that committing injustice is more shameful [aischion] than suffering it and that he has done so by using a false notion of justice – the justice of nomos. Callicles summarises his understanding of the true justice of nature [phusis] thus:

‘But I’ve told you – [sc. the better and superior are] those who are wise in the city’s affairs, and brave. For it is fitting for these to rule cities, and the just is this, for them to have more than the rest – for the rulers to have more than the ruled.’ (491c6 – d3, Irwin, 1979)

Socrates asks Callicles to clarify the implications of this type of justice for the life of the ruler. In particular, he wants to know whether the ruler must himself be temperate.² As a result of this question the discussion moves from being specifically about the nature of justice to being about the relationship of justice with aretê as a whole. Callicles suggests:

‘The fine and just according to nature is this, what I’m speaking freely of to you now – the man who is to live rightly should let his appetites grow as large as possible and not restrain them, and when these are as large as possible, he must have the power to serve them, because of his bravery and wisdom, and to fill them with whatever he has an appetite for at any time.’ (491e6 – 492a3, Irwin, 1979)

For Callicles aretê entails the cultivation of the largest possible appetite and the satisfaction of this appetite. It therefore excludes temperance and necessitates the freedom to indulge one’s appetites:

‘But in truth, Socrates – the truth you say you pursue – it is this way; luxury, intemperance, and freedom, if it is well supplied, this is virtue [aretê] and happiness; and those other things, those ornaments, those agreements of men contrary to nature, those are rubbish, worth nothing.’ (492c3 – 8, Irwin, 1979)

In order to clarify Callicles’ view of aretê, Socrates introduces the myth of the water-carrier at 493a. In this myth, a water carrier carries water in a sieve and pours it into a leaky jar. Socrates explains that a wise man suggested to him that this myth is an allegory for the idea that we are already dead and our soul is entombed in our body, with the most wretched souls being condemned continuously to satisfy insatiable

² ‘But what about themselves, my friend? Rulers or ruled in what way?’

[Callicles] What are you talking about?

I’m talking about each one of them ruling himself. Or shouldn’t he do this at all, rule himself, but only rule the others?

[Callicles] What are you talking about, ‘ruling himself’?

Nothing complicated, but just as the many say – temperate, master of himself, ruling the pleasures and appetites within him.’ (491d4 – e1, Irwin, 1979)

desires. Socrates suggests that the life Callicles describes is like the life to which this myth refers. He selects one part of the myth – the leaky jar – and urges Callicles to consider whether the life of the owner of a sound jar would be happier because, once full, his needs would be perpetually satisfied:

‘Now if this is how each man’s life is, do you say that the intemperate man’s life is happier than the orderly man’s? When I tell you this, do I persuade you at all to concede that the orderly life is better than the intemperate, or don’t I persuade you?’ (494a2 – 5, Irwin, 1979)

Callicles explains that such a man would not be happier or live a better life:

‘No, you don’t Socrates. For that one who has filled up has no more *pleasure* at all any more. It’s what I was saying just now – living like a stone once he has filled up, with no more enjoyment or distress. No; *living pleasantly* is in this – in having as much as possible [*hôs pleiston*] flowing in.’ (494a6 - b2, Irwin, 1979, my italics)

Socrates has asked Callicles a question about the nature of a [good and] happy life, yet Callicles’ reply is about the nature of a pleasant life. From his response, it becomes clear that, for him, a good and happy life is synonymous with a pleasant life. He regards the maximisation of appetite as the basis of a good and happy life, specifically because it results in the *pleasantest* life. This is Callicles’ first direct reference to pleasure within his discussion of a good life. It is noticeable that Plato did not immediately portray him as a hedonist (when he was first introduced as interlocutor), but that this aspect of Callicles’ beliefs emerges from a discussion of his view of justice and of *aretê*. Through this gradual introduction of Calliclean hedonism, Socrates demonstrates that it is an integral part of Callicles’ beliefs about justice and about the kind of life which his model of justice entails. In fact, it is the basis for achieving the type of life which Callicles advocates. Justice, according to Callicles, is for the better man to rule and have more. *Aretê* involves living in accordance with this model of justice and doing so, Callicles believes, entails living the life of a hedonist – it is in living the pleasantest life that the ruler has more than those whom he rules.

(ii) Calliclean aretê is concerned with maximising pleasure

Callicles considers that a good life is one in which the maximum pleasure is achieved. This is clearest at 494a6 – b2 (quoted above) where he responds to

Socrates' suggestion that the life of the owner of a sound jar would be happier because, once full, his needs would be satisfied. Callicles' response is that the owner of the sound jar cannot have the better life because his pleasure is finite; once his jar is full he will not, according to Callicles, get any more pleasure. For Callicles, a good life is one in which pleasure can be maximised and in which we ensure that we have as much pleasure as possible [hôs pleiston] 'flowing in'. The *Protagoras*' metrêtikê technê is, similarly, concerned with maximising pleasure:

[Socrates] 'And what other way is there for pleasure not to be worth pain except that one should be more and the other less? And that is a matter of being larger and smaller, or more and fewer, or more and less intense.' (*Protagoras* 356a1 – 5, Taylor, 1991)

Some commentators claim that Calliclean hedonism differs from the hedonism used by Socrates in the *Protagoras*, because they believe Calliclean hedonism is concerned with maximising immediate pleasure whereas the *Protagoras*' art of measurement is concerned with maximising pleasure over a lifetime. They have suggested that Socrates objects to Calliclean hedonism only because of its preoccupation with immediate pleasure. This is the view taken by Gosling and Taylor (1982, pp.72 - 73). Berman (1991) supports and develops³ Gosling and Taylor's argument.

Both Gosling and Taylor and Berman believe that Calliclean hedonism is concerned only with maximising immediate pleasures, with no concern for their long-term consequences. Callicles is, in fact, concerned with the quality of one's life overall or, as he puts it, with the actions of 'the man who is to live rightly'. The strategy which he advocates for achieving a good life overall is to let one's appetite for pleasure grow as large as possible before satisfying it:

'...the man who is to live rightly should *let his appetites grow as large as possible* and not restrain them, *and when these are as large as possible*, he must have the power to serve them...' (491e6 – 492a3, Irwin, 1979)

³ Berman develops Gosling and Taylor's argument by explaining their distinction between Calliclean hedonism (which, they claim, is concerned with short-term pleasure) and Socratic hedonism (which is concerned with measuring pleasure in the long-term), in terms of an understanding of the structure of pleasures. Berman suggests that Socrates understands that pleasures have structures, but Callicles does not (the structure of a pleasure being the relationship between the pleasure itself, its short-term effects and its long-term consequences).

So, like Socrates, Callicles is concerned with achieving a good life overall and does not advocate the immediate satisfaction of every pleasure. Both Callicles (in the *Gorgias*) and Socrates (in the *Protagoras*) express the need to avoid letting consideration of the immediacy of pleasure take precedence over considerations of quantity. Callicles suggests that this is achieved by ensuring that one's desires are allowed to grow as large as possible before they are satisfied (a strategy which actually precludes the immediate satisfaction of desire). This suggestion is not at odds with Socrates' suggestion in the *Protagoras* that a good life requires us to maximise our pleasure over a lifetime – in fact it offers a strategy for putting this into practice.

It can, however, still be argued that Callicles does not show any concern for the long-term, potentially painful, consequences of desire satisfaction. So, for example, we can assume that Callicles would advocate letting our appetite for chocolate cake grow as large as possible and then indulging it. In contrast, we may argue that the metrêtikê technê would require us to set aside the pleasure of eating large amounts of chocolate cake for the long-term, greater pleasure of good health.⁴ I would suggest, however, that Callicles is concerned with maximising pleasure over a life-time but that he does not see the consequences of desire satisfaction as relevant to this, because of his view of pleasure as occurring in the *process* of desire satisfaction (as discussed in iv below) rather than in the *state* of being satisfied. To maximise pleasure over a life-time, according to Callicles' view of pleasure, we need to satisfy *all* our desires and to do this at the point where they are as large as possible so that the pleasure we get from the process of desire satisfaction is as intense as possible.⁵ Returning to the question of chocolate cake versus health, health will only become relevant to the calculation of our pleasure when we have an active desire for it. Even then, our desire for health should not be given precedence, unless it is greater than our desire for chocolate. Calliclean aretê is concerned with maximising pleasure through the process of fulfilling desires which are as large as possible. This is entirely in line with the *Protagoras* principle that nothing should take precedence over the quantity of pleasure to be gained from our actions. The only difference is that

⁴ In the *Protagoras*, Socrates emphasises that the metrêtikê technê requires us to weigh up the quantity of pleasure that will result over a lifetime.

⁵ Intensity was, in the *Protagoras*, identified by Socrates as one of the criteria by which the quantity of pleasure can be judged. Socrates claimed (356a3 – 5) that the amount of pleasure in our lives can be quantified in terms of size (meizô te kai smikrotera), number (pleiô kai elattô) or intensity (mallon kai hêttôn).

Callicles has clarified that anything which does not contribute to the process of desire satisfaction (either by increasing the intensity of the desire or by enabling us to satisfy a desire which is as intense as possible) is irrelevant to this calculation.

(iii) Calliclean aretê entails that all pleasure is good

The objective of Calliclean hedonism is to maximise pleasure, whatever the source and nature of this pleasure:

‘Do you say that a man must not restrain his appetites, if he’s to be as he should be, but should let them grow as great as possible, and find fulfilment for them *from anywhere at all*, and that virtue is this?

[Callicles] That’s what I say.’ (492d5 – e2, Irwin 1979, my italics)

Similarly, the hedonism upon which the *Protagoras*’ metrêtikê technê is founded does not admit any qualitative distinction between pleasures. In the *Protagoras*, this feature of hedonism is derived from the beliefs of the many, who eventually acknowledge that pleasure is the only qualitative standard that they have for judging goodness in their lives and the only goal which they pursue in their actions (354d1 - 355a3). Since it is their only standard of goodness, there isn’t any qualitative basis for distinguishing between different pleasures (356a1 – 5). The value of pleasure can only be judged by its quantity; more pleasure (over a lifetime) will always be better than less. However, the practical implications of this for our lives are not explored in the *Protagoras*, whereas, in the *Gorgias*, Socrates explores them in depth. He selects the most unpalatable examples of pleasure which he can find and challenges Callicles to accept that they are good (i.e. that they can contribute to a happy life). Callicles, however, rises to the challenge and insists (494c – d) that the pleasures of scratching an itch and of the life of a catamite are both good.

Socrates does not suggest to Callicles that the pleasure experienced in scratching an itch and in the life of a catamite is not real. He appears to accept that, if the person of whom Callicles is speaking experiences pleasure, then this experience is sufficient proof of the reality of the pleasure. Socrates tries instead to persuade Callicles to distinguish between good pleasures which contribute to a happy life and bad

pleasures which do not.⁶ It is upon Callicles' refusal to accept this distinction that Socrates constructs his second argument against Calliclean aretê (from 497d).⁷

(iv) Pleasure occurs in the process of satisfying desire

Callicles makes clear that, while acknowledging that our pleasure is derived from getting what we desire, he believes that it occurs in the *process* of satisfying desire rather than in the *state* of having all our desires satisfied.⁸ He argues (494a6 - b2) against an account of pleasure as a state of desire satisfaction and suggests that once we have achieved this state (like the owner of the sound jar) we are not living a pleasant life but the life of a stone! Instead, he argues, our pleasure is derived from

⁶ 'But tell me even now; do you say that the same thing is pleasant and good, or that there is something of pleasant things which is not good?' (495a2 - 4, Irwin, 1979)

⁷ Gosling & Taylor (1982), Berman (1991) and Rudebusch (1999) suggest that Socrates' argument in the *Gorgias* is against the *type* of pleasures with which Calliclean hedonism is concerned. For Gosling & Taylor (pp.72 -3), it is an argument against short-term pleasures. For Berman (pp. 130 - 1) it is an argument against pleasures that are not 'taken in an action which has a means/ends hierarchical structure such that it in fact leads to the best possible outcome for the agent over the course of a life-time.' Rudebusch (pp. 33 - 63) believes Socrates is arguing against the pleasures of appetite satisfaction (as opposed to the pleasures which satisfy one's real desires). Socrates clearly does not approve of the pleasures which Callicles advocates, but he makes clear that what he is specifically arguing against in the *Gorgias* is Callicles' failure to distinguish between good and bad pleasures - Callicles' stubborn insistence on the pleasantness of scratching an itch and being a catamite are simply examples of the failure to make such a distinction:

[Callicles] 'Aren't you ashamed to lead the discussion to such things, Socrates?

[Socrates] Well, is it me who's leading it there, my noble friend, or is it whoever says with no qualification that those who have enjoyment are happy, and doesn't distinguish among pleasures those which are good and bad? (494e7 - 495a2, Irwin, 1979)

Socrates' specific criticism is not that Callicles believes that such things are pleasant/good but that he fails to make a distinction between good and bad pleasures or to acknowledge that any pleasure can be bad. It is important to clarify this point because the argument which follows, and particularly the argument from 497d (see section 2.2), has implications for *any* model of hedonism which fails to distinguish between good and bad pleasures - not just those concerned with a particular type of pleasure. The hedonism of the *Protagoras*, in its failure to distinguish between good and bad pleasures, is just as vulnerable as Calliclean hedonism to Socrates' argument from *Gorgias* 497d. It should also be noted that Socrates does not, at any point, suggest to Callicles that the pleasure of scratching an itch and being a catamite is not real/true pleasure. He appears to accept in the *Gorgias* that, if a person experiences pleasure, then this experience is sufficient proof of the reality of the pleasure. Socrates' concern in the *Gorgias* is to establish the existence of bad pleasures. There appears no direct evidence here of the distinction between true and false pleasure which emerges in *Republic* IX (583b ff.). Again, this means that Socrates' argument in the *Gorgias* represents a challenge to any model of hedonism which regards all pleasure as good.

⁸ Gosling & Taylor (1982, chapter 6) argue that, in the *Gorgias*, Plato is not clear on the distinction between 'replenishment' and 'repletion' and that he remains unclear on this distinction throughout his discussion of pleasure in *Republic* IX. I would suggest that 494a6 - b2 shows that Plato has a very clear understanding of the distinction between the two and is at pains to show that, according to Calliclean hedonism, pleasure is replenishment (the process of satisfying desire) rather than repletion (the state of having all one's desires satisfied).



the process of desire satisfaction and, by maximising the number and intensity of our desires, we will have 'as much [pleasure] as possible flowing in'.

In making this point, Callicles acknowledges that his account of a good life as a life devoted to the maximisation of pleasure is incompatible with an account of pleasure as a state of desire satisfaction. Such a state, by definition, results in our being happy with a finite amount of pleasure and, therefore, lacking the motivation to pursue any more. As a result, we would not, according to Callicles' model of aretê, be living a good life.⁹ Instead, we must accept that pleasure occurs in the process of fulfilling our desires and that it is in our interests to nurture our desires to make them as wide ranging and intense as possible. In this way we will create unlimited opportunities to experience pleasure, and thus to maximise pleasure in our lives.

It could be argued that this account of pleasure sets Calliclean aretê apart from the metrêtikê technê. Socrates does not, in the *Protagoras*, offer any account of how or when pleasure actually occurs. However, Callicles' clarification of the definition of pleasure upon which his own account of aretê depends has implications for any account of aretê as the maximisation of pleasure in our lives and this includes the *Protagoras*' metrêtikê technê. In fact, Callicles' argument adds detail to the *Protagoras*' 'sketch' of aretê by clarifying the definition/account of pleasure on which it depends and offering a practical strategy for pursuing pleasure. In doing so, the *Gorgias* begins to fulfil the promise which Socrates made at *Protagoras* 357b4 – c1 to add more detail to the initial sketch of aretê.

On the other hand, it is upon Callicles' account of pleasure as the process of satisfying desire that Socrates constructs the first part of his argument against Calliclean hedonism. Callicles' clarity about what his vision of a good life entails is, in the end, the basis of his downfall.

4.3 Establishing the Right Environment

In the next section I will explore how, in the *Gorgias*, Socrates subjects the model of aretê which he proposed in the *Protagoras* to a thorough and rigorous examination.

⁹ Santas (2001, p.55 note 16) claims that Callicles does not distinguish between desire-satisfaction and hedonistic theories of good. However, I would suggest that he makes a clear distinction and, furthermore, explores the relationship between the two. He demonstrates that hedonism is compatible with the pursuit of desire satisfaction, but not with the state of desire satisfaction.

In this section I will first show how, before doing this, Plato takes care to establish the right environment for this examination by making sure that this model of aretê as the maximisation of pleasure in our lives is:

- represented by the most appropriate interlocutor;
- examined in an environment which is free from any sense of shame which may influence the interlocutor's beliefs and inhibit his replies.

(i) The right interlocutor

The transition in the first part of the *Gorgias* from Gorgias to Polus as interlocutor (at 461b) and then from Polus to Calicles (at 481b) serves not only to present three different models of a good life but also to explore three different characters and their beliefs. The reader comes to recognise that Calicles is the right person to defend a model of aretê founded upon hedonism, because it is in line with his genuinely held beliefs (as discussed in 4.2 above).

The differences between the three interlocutors are explored through their respective attempts to define rhetoric and to justify Polus' claim (448c9 & e5) that rhetoric is the finest [kallistê] technê. As a result of this claim, to kalon is the value through which their understanding of the nature of rhetoric and its role within a good life is explored by Socrates.

Gorgias' account of rhetoric refers not only to the ability to use persuasion in order to satisfy his personal desire for power, but also to the ability to do this justly. Although he advocates achieving personal power as a key objective of rhetoric,¹⁰ he is not prepared to accept that rhetoricians can practise their art without knowledge of justice.¹¹ Gorgias' account of the kallistê technê is two dimensional - it embraces practising justice as well as pursuing his own success. We recognise, therefore, that he could not accept a one dimensional account of a good life founded upon hedonism - and in fact, Gorgias does not refer at all to the pursuit of pleasure. Although we can argue that it is implicit that Gorgias takes pleasure in achieving personal power - in satisfying his desire for 'freedom for a man himself' and 'rule over others in his own city' (452e) - he clearly believes that achieving such 'pleasure'

¹⁰ For example at 452e1 – 8.

¹¹ He concedes this at 460a3 – 4.

through injustice is not kalon. Justice is, ultimately, as important to Gorgias as the pleasure of personal success.

Gorgias is replaced by Polus who, initially, seems the ideal candidate to represent hedonism. His high regard for Archelaus' life (470e – 471d) illustrates his initial position that to satisfy one's own desires (which, for Polus, entails obtaining personal power) is kalon because it is the basis of a happy life. Furthermore, he regards desire satisfaction as integrally connected with pleasure and is delighted when Socrates suggests (474d ff.) that something is kalon either because it is pleasant or useful [kata tèn chreian, 474d6], [chrêsimon, 474d7] or beneficial [dia ôphelian, 474e3]. In accepting this definition of to kalon, Polus appears to be interpreting 'useful' and 'beneficial' in the light of his reference to Archelaus, to mean 'contributing to the satisfaction of my desires'.

However, it gradually emerges that, for Polus, justice does have value in its own right, even when it results in less pleasure for him. This becomes apparent when he accepts that committing injustice is more shameful [aischion] than suffering injustice and that paying the penalty for injustice is a finer [kallion] action than avoiding punishment.¹² At 476e Polus accepts directly that just things are fine [kala] and we recognise that he is really no different from Gorgias - his account of to kalon is not purely based upon pleasure. For Polus, too, there is more to a good life (and to a happy life)¹³ than maximising his own pleasure.

Polus is replaced as interlocutor by Callicles, whose introductory speech (481b – 484c) on the distinction between nature (phusis) and convention (nomos) makes clear that for him there is no other dimension to a good life than maximising one's pleasure by cultivating desires and actively pursuing their satisfaction. Callicles' hedonism (see 4.2i above) is underpinned by his rejection of a conventional view of aretê and a genuine belief that there is nothing more to a kalon life than serving one's own interests as far as possible. The reader can recognise that Callicles' total freedom from conventional notions of aretê which distinguish justice from the pursuit of personal success, sets him apart from both Gorgias and Polus, and makes him a formidable advocate for hedonism.

¹² Socrates' questioning forces Polus to admit that things can be 'useful' and 'beneficial' for reasons other than their pleasantness, and that just actions are an example of this.

¹³ Socrates' questioning leads Polus to admit that, despite his initial position, justice is more important in living a happy life than desire satisfaction because injustice is more harmful to the soul.

(ii) Establishing free speech

Plato's treatment of the motifs of shame [aischron/aischunô] and free speech [parrêsia]), which are prominent throughout Socrates' conversation with Polus and Callicles,¹⁴ contributes to creating the right environment for an exploration of hedonism. The right environment is one free of any sense of shame which may influence the interlocutor's beliefs and inhibit his replies. Wherever the motif of shame occurs in the *Gorgias*, shame is presented as a misleading or inhibiting factor. So, for example, Polus complains that Socrates is playing upon Gorgias' sense of shame and using this to influence his replies:

'What, Socrates? Do you really believe what you're saying now about rhetoric? Do you really suppose – just because Gorgias was ashamed not to agree further with you that the rhetor would also know the just, the fine, and the good things, and that if he didn't know them when he came to Gorgias, Gorgias himself would teach him, and then perhaps from that agreement some opposition came about in his statements – the thing that you're so satisfied about, when you yourself led him into those questions – for who do you suppose would deny that he himself knew the just things and would teach others? It's simply the height of bad breeding to lead the discussion to such things.' (461b3 - c4, Irwin, 1979)

Callicles has a similar complaint about Polus; he too has been influenced by his sense of shame:

'And for just this I can't admire Polus myself, for his concession to you that doing injustice is more shameful than suffering it; for from this agreement he himself in turn was bound up by you in the argument, and was muzzled, after being ashamed to say what he thought.' (482d7 – e2, Irwin, 1979)

Callicles believes that the values of society are also influenced and misled by a sense of shame:

'For by nature everything is more shameful which is also worse, suffering injustice, but by rule doing injustice is more shameful.' (483a7 - 8, Irwin, 1979)

¹⁴ The motif occurs, for example, at 461b5, 463a5, 463d4, 472c8, 474c7, 474d1, 482e2, 483c7 and 487b1 – 5.

Shame represents a barrier to effective dialectic. Callicles' total freedom from any such sense of shame thus represents the removal of this barrier and so contributes towards the creation of the right conditions for dialectic.

The motif of free speech (parrêsia) complements the motif of shame. Socrates believes that the right interlocutor will not only be free of any sense of shame but will also be willing to express his beliefs freely. He is concerned that both Gorgias and Polus fail to meet this criterion:

'And these foreign visitors, Gorgias and Polus, are wise and friends of mine, but short of free speaking, and more prone to shame than they should be.' (487a7 – b2, Irwin, 1979)

Callicles, in contrast, is all too willing to speak freely:

[Socrates] 'And as for being the type to speak freely without shame, you say it yourself and your speech a little earlier agrees with you.' (487d5 – 7, Irwin, 1979)

Callicles is not in any way ashamed of his view of justice and it is clear that Socrates will not be able to shame Callicles into denying the hedonism upon which Calliclean justice is founded. Instead, if he is to defeat Calliclean hedonism, Socrates must show that it is incompatible with the type of justice and the type of life Callicles believes in. Hedonism is the foundation of Callicles' belief system, and only if its position as such is challenged might he be persuaded to abandon it. By taking time within the *Gorgias* to establish the ideal interlocutor and environment for an exploration of hedonism, Plato encourages us to take Socrates' subsequent rejection of Calliclean hedonism seriously. We recognise that hedonism is being put to the test, represented by the best possible advocate - if Callicles cannot defend it, then no-one can.

4.4 Challenging Callicles' model of aretê

Having established that Callicles is the best possible interlocutor to defend a model of aretê founded upon hedonism, Socrates puts forward two arguments against such a model. Both arguments are derived directly from premises Callicles has agreed to about the nature of a good (and bad) life. Firstly, Socrates argues that Callicles'

hedonistic view of a good life actually requires the compresence of good (pleasant) and bad (painful) states. Secondly, he demonstrates that it requires him to value human qualities (courage and ignorance) which, according to his account of aretê, are bad. Taken together, the two arguments suggest that Calicles is proposing a contradictory account of a good life in which living the kind of life he claims to be good depends upon both living and valuing the kind of life he believes to be bad.

(i) Calliclean aretê requires the compresence of good and bad states

The first part of Socrates' argument against Calliclean hedonism (from 495e – 497d) concentrates upon two key features of Calliclean hedonism – its objective of maximising pleasure (see 4.2i above) and its account of pleasure as the process of desire satisfaction (see 4.2v above). Socrates demonstrates that these two aspects of Calliclean hedonism result in a contradictory account of a good life. He presents his argument in four main stages:

Stage 1 – Good and bad states cannot be compresent

- (a) Faring well [eu prattein] and faring badly [kakôs prattein] are opposite states (495e1 – 5).
- (b) Faring well and faring badly are like the opposite states of sickness and health, strength and weakness and speed and slowness, in that a person cannot have both together or lose both at the same time (495e6 – 496b4).¹⁵
- (c) Faring well is a good state, characterised by a life of happiness [eudaimonia] in which good things¹⁶ are present and bad things are excluded. Faring badly is a bad state, characterised by a life of wretchedness [athliotês] from which good things are excluded. These two states can only be present in turn [en merei] and cannot be present (or cease) at the same time as each other (496b5 – c5).

¹⁵ Socrates does not explain why faring well and faring badly cannot be compresent or cease at the same time. Nor does he explain why this is also the case for sickness and health. Presumably, Socrates interprets faring well as having more good things than bad overall in one's life and faring badly as having more bad things than good. If we were to interpret faring well only as having some good things in one's life, then there wouldn't be any reason why it couldn't be compresent with (and cease at the same time as) faring badly. Similarly, we can assume that by health, Socrates means an overall/predominant state of physical well-being which, therefore, cannot be compresent with an overall state of ill-health.

¹⁶ Again, we need to interpret 'good things' [tagatha – 496b5] as 'a predominance of good things' if Socrates' argument is to be valid (see preceding footnote).

Stage 2 – plêrôsis is pleasure and epithumia is pain

- (d) Every lack [endeia] and appetite [epithumia] is painful. Thirst and hunger are cited as examples (496c6 – d4).¹⁷
- (e) The filling [plêrôsis] of a lack/appetite is pleasant. Drinking when thirsty and eating when hungry are cited as examples (496d4 – e2).

Stage 3 – Pleasure and pain can be compresent

- (f) We can experience pleasure and pain at the same time and in the same place. Drinking when thirsty is cited as an example – Calicles has agreed that thirst is a lack [endeia and epithumia] and that the process of filling [plêrôsis] that lack (while our thirst is still present) is pleasant (496e3 – 9).
- (g) Experiencing pleasure and pain cannot be the same as faring well and faring badly (which cannot be compresent) and, therefore, the pleasant cannot be the same as the good [to agathon]¹⁸ (496e9 – 497a5).

Stage 4 – Pleasure and pain can cease at the same moment

- (h) We can cease from pleasure and pain at the same time. Stopping drinking at the point when we stop being thirsty and stopping eating when we cease to be hungry are examples (497c5 – 9).
- (i) Pleasures and pains cannot, therefore, be the same as goods and evils (497d1 – 7).¹⁹

¹⁷ In associating desire with a lack Socrates is probably drawing upon the ideas of Empedocles. Gosling and Taylor (1982, pp.19 – 23) discuss the evidence that Empedocles described pleasure as the making up [plêrôsis] of a deficiency [endeia] which causes a state of pain, with desire as the natural inclination to fill this deficiency. Socrates, however, takes the association between desire and lack one stage further by assuming that the desire which is the natural result of a lack has the same characteristic (i.e. painfulness) as the lack itself. He does not argue for this but Calicles accepts it without question. I would suggest that this is a deliberate development on Socrates' part of the idea that a lack is painful – a development which enables him to demonstrate a direct contradiction in Calicles' account of a good life. Socrates has already demonstrated that, for Calicles, our having pleasure is dependent upon our having desire – desire must be there for us to derive pleasure from (the process) of fulfilling it. When Calicles accepts that this desire is itself painful, he implicitly accepts the principle that our experiencing pleasure depends directly upon our being in pain. By applying this principle in the remaining stages of the argument, Socrates demonstrates that Calicles' account of a good life (as pleasant) is contradictory, in that it is actually identical with his account of a bad (i.e.) painful one.

¹⁸ That is, it cannot be the same as the good things (ta agatha – 496b5) which characterise faring well. Socrates has already referred to these collectively as the good at 496c3 and he does so again here.

A number of criticisms of this argument have been made.²⁰ Of these criticisms, Irwin's objection (see footnote 20 iv) - that the argument does not show that hedonism requires an overall state of pleasure and an overall state of pain to be compresent – appears to have the most validity. Taken in isolation from his preceding discussion with Callicles, Socrates' argument from 495e – 497d demonstrates only that a person must experience *some* pain (desire) and *some* pleasure (desire satisfaction) together. It does not demonstrate that the person's overall/predominant state must, at the same time, be one of both pleasure and of pain. Socrates' argument shows, for example, that in drinking when thirsty, a person experiences some pain and some pleasure together. He does not, however, demonstrate that, because of this, the person's overall state is necessarily one of both pleasure and pain.²¹ Irwin suggests (1979, p.202) that Socrates 'does not rely heavily on this argument' and that 'perhaps it is only a preliminary argument, making clear how the hedonist position must be understood.'

However, when we interpret Socrates' argument in its full context – namely in the light of the key features of Calliclean hedonism which have emerged through his discussion with Callicles – the argument does identify a significant difficulty with Callicles' model of aretê. Irwin does not take into account that Callicles has made

¹⁹ This conclusion draws on 496b5 – c5. Pleasures and pains cannot be the same as the good and bad things which are indicative of faring well and faring badly, because the former can be compresent (and can cease at the same time) whereas the latter cannot.

²⁰ (i) Adkins (1960, p.80, n.10) argues that 'Plato is cheating: it is "drinking when thirsty" that Callicles should have admitted to be pleasant – thereby destroying the argument – not drinking *per se*. Guthrie (1975, p.291, n.2) points out that it is precisely because drinking when thirsty is pleasant that Socrates can claim that pleasure 'coincides with the pain of thirst'.

(ii) Dodds (1959, p.309) refers to a criticism discussed by Olympiodorus (146.13) that 'in drinking when thirsty the pleasure and pain are not strictly simultaneous – the pain comes first.' Olympiodorus pointed out, however, that the thirst does persist through the act of drinking and so the two are present together.

(iii) Irwin (1979, pp.201 – 202) suggests that Socrates' argument is not supported by an account of where/how the pains of hunger and thirst and the pleasures of eating and drinking occur. He claims that the argument fails to demonstrate that pleasure and pain are compresent (i.e. that they occur together in the same place) and does not exclude the possibility that where pleasure and pain are experienced together they occur in different parts of a person. Socrates could, however, counter this criticism by claiming that by simply being present together in one person they are compresent.

(iv) Irwin also argues (1979, p.202) that Socrates doesn't demonstrate that an overall state of pleasure (i.e. having more pleasure than pain) can be compresent with an overall state of pain (i.e. having more pain than pleasure). He claims that the argument only shows that a person can experience pleasure in some respects and, at the same time, pain in other respects.

²¹ The pleasure of drinking may outweigh the pain of thirst (or vice versa) and so, despite the compresence of pleasure and pain, one will predominate.

clear that maximising pleasure is the objective of a good life and that this objective is achieved by maximising desire (see 4.2 above). When interpreted in the light of this, Socrates' argument shows that, according to Callicles, we must maximise pain (desire)²² in our life in order to maximise pleasure (the process of fulfilling desire). This *does* require the compresence of a good and bad state overall,²³ something which Callicles agrees (495e6 – 496b4) is impossible.

Since this argument forms an integral part of Socrates' discussion of Calliclean hedonism, we are justified in interpreting it in the light of the rest of the discussion. When we do so, it becomes apparent why Socrates believes that his argument from the compresence of good and bad states raises a valid objection to Calliclean hedonism. He has shown that Callicles' account of a good life is one in which we maximise pleasure by maximising pain, which is a contradictory account of a good life. To fare well [eu pratein] by maximising what is good (pleasant) in our life, we must also maximise what is bad (painful). To fare well [eu pratein] we must also fare badly [kakôs pratein]. We must actually embrace the kind of life which Callicles despises – a life without all the things he regards as agatha. This will entail abandoning the life epitomised by those whom Callicles admires (those with 'a living, reputation and many other goods [agatha]' 486d1) and accepting instead the life of those 'who live in an empty house' (486c7 – 8).

(ii) Calliclean aretê values cowardice and ignorance

In an argument from 497d, Socrates raises a second criticism of Calliclean hedonism. This criticism focuses on:

- Callicles' belief that all pleasure is good (see 4.2iv above) and that the indiscriminate pursuit of pleasure constitutes aretê;

²² Socrates' argument relies upon Callicles' acceptance that desire is painful. Without this, Callicles would have to admit only that the states of desire and pleasure must be compresent (and there would be no obvious contradiction in this). Callicles accepts without question that desire is painful and Socrates does not appear to justify this part of his argument. However, if we interpret Socrates' suggestion that 'every lack and appetite is painful' [496d4] as establishing the premises that (i) all desire indicates the perception of a lack and (ii) any lack is painful, Socrates is then justified in concluding from these premises that the desire which is the perception of a lack is a perception of pain and will itself be painful.

²³ A state in which the person's life is as pleasant as possible must be compresent with a state in which it is as painful as possible.

- Callicles' belief that bravery and wisdom underpin the successful pursuit of pleasure.

Callicles has suggested that, in order to live a good life, a man must have the power to serve his appetites, when these are as large as possible, 'because of his bravery and wisdom' (492a1 - 2). Callicles sees no conflict between a life of bravery and wisdom and one devoted to the pursuit of pleasure. In fact, he believes that the successful pursuit of pleasure both requires and demonstrates these qualities:

'First of all I say who the superior men are – I don't say shoemakers or cooks; they're whoever are wise in the city's affairs, about how to govern it well, and not only wise, but also brave, and capable of fulfilling what they intend – and who don't slacken because of softness of soul.' (491a7 – b4, Irwin 1979)

Callicles believes that a life devoted to the pursuit of all types of pleasure carries the qualitative guarantee that it will be both brave and wise. Bravery, wisdom and hedonism are, for Callicles, integrally connected and, together, they form the basis of a model of aretê which is sufficient to achieve personal power and thus live according to Callicles' model of natural justice.

From 497d, however, Socrates challenges Callicles' belief that a life devoted to the pursuit of pleasure will also be brave and wise. He does so by gaining agreement to the following premises which are derived either from Callicles' model of aretê [A], from his hedonistic philosophy [H] or simply from his observation of life [O]:

- (a) Just as the beautiful are beautiful because of the presence of beauty, so good men are good because of the presence to them of good things (497e1 - 3) [A].²⁴

²⁴ Irwin (1979, p.203) questions the validity of this premise. He suggests that Socrates establishes this premise by choosing an example of an intrinsic good (being beautiful) and applying this, incorrectly, to an instrumental good (having aretê). Irwin's objection involves a comparison between:

- Beauty (being beautiful) which is an intrinsic good, i.e. something which is a good in itself; and
- Aretê (according to Irwin, aretê is the power to acquire good) which, by Irwin's definition, is an instrumental good i.e. a means of achieving goodness rather than a good in itself.

Irwin suggests that, whereas it is valid to say that X is beautiful because it has beauty, it is not valid to say that X has the power to obtain pleasure because he has pleasure - X might just have 'stumbled on some pleasure' rather than acquiring it by any power. Yet, even if we accept Irwin's interpretation of aretê as an instrumental good, I would suggest that Socrates' premise remains valid. If we experience pleasure, surely it does demonstrate (by the simple fact that we do experience it) that we had the power to acquire this pleasure. 'Stumbling on' pleasure cannot be

- (b) Brave and wise men are good (497e3 – 5, 499a1 - 2) [A].
- (c) Cowards and fools are bad (499a3 - 4) [A].
- (d) Good and bad men enjoy pleasure about equally; in fact sometimes bad men [cowards and fools] have greater pleasure (498e5 - 8) [O].
- (e) Pleasures are good and pains are evil (498d3 - 4) [H].
- (f) Those who have pleasure are good and those who are in pain are bad (498e2 - 3) [H].

Socrates concludes:

‘Then doesn’t the bad man turn out to be good and bad similarly to the good man, or even better? Doesn’t this follow, with those previous things, if someone says that the same things are pleasant and good? Mustn’t this follow, Callicles?’ (499a7 – b3, Irwin, 1979)

The example of going to war, which Socrates used within the final argument of the *Protagoras* from 358a, reappears in the *Gorgias* (from 498a – c) within the argument outlined above. Whether or not this represents a direct reference to the *Protagoras*, it certainly presents a striking contrast to it. In the *Protagoras* (359e – 360a), Socrates argued that courage in going to war is both kalon and pleasant. Here, Socrates argues that cowardice in war results in at least as much pleasure as bravery. Irwin (1979, pp.204 – 5) points out that this argument demonstrates a conflict between Callicles’ ‘advocacy of unrestricted desire-satisfaction’ and his belief that a good man is wise and courageous. If we accept, as Callicles does, that the pursuit of pleasure is good, regardless of the type of pleasure, then we must adjust our model of aretê accordingly. We must either accept that fools and cowards can achieve a good life, or accept that what we regard as foolishness and cowardice is, in fact, bravery and wisdom. Santas describes the model of aretê which Socrates suggests we are left with if we accept Calliclean hedonism:

‘The Calliclean notion of a good man has been reduced to a man who has no consideration for others, and whose wisdom and courage consist *entirely* in the ability to maximise his pleasures and minimize his pains.’ (Santas, 1979, p.284)

Callicles cannot accept this. It turns out that even he believes that there is more to a good life than the indiscriminate pursuit of pleasure. As a result he has to admit the

dismissed as an accident rather than a power – ‘stumbling on’ is the result of an action of some kind (however haphazard and unplanned the action may be) and, therefore, the result of our power to acquire pleasure by our actions.

possibility of a qualitative distinction between pleasures – the existence of good (kalon) and bad (aischron) pleasures. In fact he pretends that he has always made this distinction and that he was only joking before:

'I've been listening to you for a long time and agreeing, Socrates, thinking that even if someone concedes something to you as a joke, you fasten on it gleefully like young boys. As though you really suppose that I or any other man don't think some pleasures are better and others worse.' (499b4 – 8)

In doing so, Calicles gives up one of the fundamental principles of his own model of aretê and, in making him do so, Socrates gives up one of the fundamental principles of the *Protagoras*' metrêtikê technê.

(iii) A contradictory account of aretê

Together, Socrates' two arguments show that Calicles' model of aretê results in a contradictory account of a good life. The first argument shows that the objective of maximising pleasure in our lives requires us to live in a constant (painful) state of desire for more pleasure. The second argument shows that Calicles' assumption that all pleasure is good (and that we can distinguish between pleasures only on the basis of quantity) means that we must praise any action which enables us to achieve pleasure. This means we must praise actions which our instinct tells us are wrong – we cannot value anything other than the successful pursuit of pleasure or criticise anything other than the failure to achieve pleasure. Each of the two arguments complements the other by demonstrating a contradiction in Calicles' model of aretê. It is easy to assume that the second argument is the more significant²⁵ - because this is the one that Calicles actually acknowledges and which makes him concede defeat. However, both arguments demonstrate a different contradiction in Caliclean aretê – the first highlights its direct impact on the quality (pleasantness/painfulness) of our lives and the second highlights its impact on our value system. The second argument appears to have more effect on Calicles, but both should be given equal attention by the reader, since (as I will discuss in the next chapter) Socrates builds upon both of these arguments in the second part of the dialogue and both have a key role in with the development of a model of aretê which begins to address the weaknesses of the *Protagoras*' metrêtikê technê.

²⁵ As a number of commentators do (e.g. Irwin, 1979, p.202).

4.5 Conclusion: an alternative model of aretê?

In the *Gorgias*, Socrates makes clear, through his discussion with Callicles, that the model of aretê which Socrates proposed in the *Protagoras* results in a contradictory account of a good life - a contradiction which is inherent both in its objective of maximising pleasure in our lives and in its assumption that all pleasure is good. In demonstrating this, Socrates argues directly against a model of aretê which, at the end of the *Protagoras* was, on his own admission, jeering at both himself and Protagoras from a position of strength. The *Protagoras* emphasised the strengths of a model of aretê founded upon hedonism and, while hinting at its weaknesses, challenged Socrates and Protagoras to come up with anything better. I would suggest that, in the *Gorgias*, Socrates begins to rise to this challenge by introducing a different model of aretê. His confidence in the potential of this model explains his willingness to challenge the metrêtikê technê.

Immediately after his attack on Calliclean hedonism, Socrates gives an account of aretê in terms of order [kosmos]:

‘Then the virtue [aretê] of each thing is something structured [tetagmenon] and ordered [kekosmêmenon] by a structure [taxei]?’

[Callicles] I would say so myself.

Then it is some order [kosmos] – the proper order for each of the things that are – which makes the thing good by coming to be present in it.

[Callicles] I myself think so.’ (Irwin, 1979, 506e1 – 4)

He concludes that the aretê of the soul also rests in its proper order.

‘Then a soul with its own proper order [kosmos] is better than a disordered soul?’

[Callicles] It must be.’ (Irwin, 1979, 506e4 – 5)

Here Socrates is suggesting that order [kosmos] in the soul can be the basis of an account of aretê. In the next chapter I will argue that he proposes this account in response to the difficulties that he has highlighted with the metrêtikê technê.

However, I will suggest that, rather than representing the ‘tearing up’ of his sketch of aretê as the metrêtikê technê, the introduction of order into his account of aretê marks the beginning of a process of *refining* this sketch. Socrates’ ‘attack’ on Calliclean hedonism (which clearly identifies the weaknesses of the metrêtikê technê)

has provided a clear indication of the difficulties which need to be addressed if this model of aretê is to survive and Socrates' introduction of kosmos into his account of aretê represents a response to this. In the *Gorgias* and beyond,²⁶ Socrates remains committed to a model of aretê as the art of measuring pleasure in our lives.

²⁶ In later chapters I will argue that the sketch which originates in the metrêtikê technê is developed further in the *Phaedo*, *Republic* and *Statesman*.

Sketching the ‘Sôtêria Tou Biou’

Plato and the Art of Measurement

Chapter 5 – Refining the sketch; aretê as measurement of order

(*Gorgias* 501a – 507e)

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I discussed how, from *Gorgias* 495e – 499b, Socrates identifies two key weaknesses with the account of a good life advocated by Callicles. In doing so, Socrates also challenges the account of aretê as the art of measurement which he himself proposed in the *Protagoras*. The weaknesses with Calliclean hedonism which Socrates highlights are, firstly, its objective of maximising pleasure in our lives and, secondly, its insistence that all pleasure is good. Socrates shows that these two aspects of Calliclean hedonism result in a contradictory account of a good life according to which, in order to achieve a life which is as good (pleasant) as possible we must actively cultivate our desire for pleasure – which is something painful and, therefore, bad.

In this chapter I will explore how, immediately after his attack on Calliclean hedonism, Socrates introduces an alternative account of aretê as the ability to achieve a state of order [kosmos] in our lives. In section two, I will show how, while this account offers an alternative to Calliclean aretê (and thus to the metrêtikê technê), Socrates still presents achieving aretê in our lives as a technê - the technical ability to give a rational account [logos] of order in our lives and to put this account into practice. However, this technê is practised by the politician on behalf of the individual citizen (rather than by the citizen himself) and this represents a key difference both from Calliclean aretê and from the metrêtikê technê.

In section three, I use the analogy which Socrates draws between health in the body and order in the soul¹ to explore the nature of the technê which he is now proposing as the basis of aretê. I conclude that he now presents aretê as the ability to maintain a proportionate mixture of ‘powers’ [dunameis] within our lives. In section four, I

¹ 504a3 – 5, 504b7 – c1.

suggest that our achieving this proportionate mixture depends upon the politician controlling pleasure in our lives. So, pleasure continues to play a central role in this model of aretê - as it did in Calliclean aretê (and in the metrêtikê technê). Now, however, the technê entails the ability to control rather than to maximise the amount of pleasure in our lives.

So how does this model respond to the difficulties of Calliclean aretê and of the metrêtikê technê? In section five I suggest (referring again to the analogy which Socrates draws with health) that, because it entails our recognising and achieving the *right amount* of pleasure in our lives, it avoids the difficulties involved in an account of aretê as the maximisation of pleasure. In section six, I explore how its concern with achieving the right amount of pleasure also entails our accepting that not all pleasure is good. Thus the model overcomes the difficulties inherent in an account of aretê that treats all pleasure as good.

In section seven, I conclude that Socrates' account of aretê as the ability to achieve kosmos in our lives does not represent his abandonment of his sketch of aretê as the metrêtikê technê, but rather his refinement of it. It responds to the difficulties of the metrêtikê technê while retaining its essential character as a practical art (technê), founded upon hedonism, of measuring pleasure in our lives. Socrates' account brings difficulties of its own, however, in that its rejection of hedonism means that it is not supported by an adequate account of our individual motivation to live a good life in the way that the metrêtikê technê was (through its foundation upon hedonism). To this extent, Socrates' refined account of aretê loses one of the key strengths of the metrêtikê technê in an attempt to respond to its weaknesses. Plato highlights this through Callicles' withdrawal from the discussion (505c1 – 2) at the point when it becomes clear that Socrates' account of a good life rules out unrestricted desire satisfaction.

5.2 Aretê as the ability to achieve order in our lives

Socrates' account of aretê as the ability to achieve order [kosmos] in our lives emerges when Socrates asks Callicles (at 500a) who it is that possesses the ability to distinguish between good and bad pleasures.² Callicles agrees, when prompted by

² Socrates' second argument against Calliclean hedonism has forced Callicles to concede that his account of a good life must distinguish between good and bad pleasures, in order to accommodate the other qualities he regards as part of a good life (particularly courage and wisdom).

Socrates, that only a craftsman [technikos] has the ability. Socrates then recalls his previous discussion with Polus about the difference between a technê (medicine is used as the example) and a knack [empeiria]:

'I said that medicine has considered the nature [phusis] of what it cares for and the explanation [aitia] of what it does [hôn prattei], and can give a rational account [logos] of each of these things.' (501a1 – 3, Irwin, 1979)³

Socrates suggests to Callicles, as he had previously suggested to Polus, that the distinguishing characteristic of a technê is a concern for achieving what is best - an objective which each technê accomplishes by possessing a genuine understanding of its own area of expertise, as described in 501a - 3. He contrasts the characteristics of a technê with those of an empeiria, which is concerned only with giving pleasure and achieves this without rational understanding [alogôs, 501a6] through their recollection [mnêmê, 501a7] of what usually happens [eiôthotês, 501b1].

In his discussion with Polus, Socrates had identified the ability of a technê to give a rational account [logos] but did not explore the precise nature of this logos. With Callicles, however, Socrates explores the nature of the rational account [logos] which only a craftsman can provide. He suggests that this is an account of the correct order and structure of the product of his work⁴ - a suggestion which arises as Socrates and Callicles argue whether rhetoric is a technê and whether some of the earlier politicians, whom Callicles has cited as examples of true craftsmen,⁵ demonstrated true craftsmanship in their rhetoric. In arguing that they did not, Socrates explains that a technê involves working to achieve a form [eidos, 503e4] consisting of a particular structure [taxis, 503e7, 504a8] and order [kosmos, 504a8] within which one

³ Here Socrates refers to 465a where, in his conversation with Polus, he also distinguished between a craft and a knack and cited cookery as an example of a knack which impersonates the technê of medicine: 'And I say it is not a craft, but a knack, because it has no rational account [logos] by which it applies the things it applies, to say what they are by nature, so that it cannot say what is the explanation of each thing; and I don't call anything a craft which is unreasoning [alogon].' (465a2 - 6, Irwin, 1979)

Socrates claims, at 501a1 – 3, only to be recapping on his previous distinction between technê and empeiria. In fact, he develops his original distinction by suggesting that each technê's understanding of its own area of expertise [hou therapeuei, 501a1], literally 'of what it cares for', embraces an understanding of its function [hôn prattei, 501a2], literally 'of the things which it does'.

⁴ We can assume, as Socrates does not suggest otherwise, that an account of the order and structure of the product of a craft represents an account of both its nature [phusis] and its function [aitian hôn prattei]. At 501a1 – 3, Socrates says that the craftsman must be able to provide a logos of both.

⁵ Callicles cites Themistocles, Cimon, Miltiades and Pericles as examples of politicians who could claim to be genuine craftsmen because their aim was to achieve the best interests of the citizens of Athens (503c).

thing is fitting [prepon, 504a1] and suitable [harmottein, 504a1] to another. The craftsman must have the ability to achieve this order and structure in the product of his work:

- trainers and doctors bring order and structure (health and strength) to the body (504a3 – 5);
- a builder brings order and structure to a house (504a8 – 9);
- a shipwright brings order and structure to a boat (504a11);
- a good politician brings order and structure to the soul (504d5 – e4).

Socrates suggests, furthermore, that the aretê of each thing consists in this order and structure and that it is, therefore, by achieving the correct order and structure that the craftsman can achieve what is best within his field of expertise. Aretê is the result of a technê - a principle which holds for aretê in the soul as much as for aretê in the body of in the product of any practical craft:

'[Socrates] But now, the virtue [aretê] of each thing, a tool, a body, and, further, a soul and a whole animal, doesn't come to be present in the best way just at random, but by some structure and correctness and craft, the one assigned to each of them. Is this so?

- I say so.⁶

Then the virtue of each thing is something structured and ordered by a structure?

- I would say so myself.

Then it is some order⁷ – the proper order for each of the things that are – which makes the thing good by coming to be present in it.

- I myself think so.

Then a soul with its own proper order is better than a disordered soul?

- It must be' (506d5 – e4, Irwin, 1979)

⁶ By this stage Socrates is answering his own questions as Calicles has withdrawn from the discussion.

⁷ Until this point, Socrates has talked about structure [taxis] and order [kosmos] as the joint components of the form [eidos] which the craftsman must create to achieve aretê in his product. At 506e2, however, and thereafter, he refers only to kosmos in his account of aretê. I would suggest that Socrates believes he has established sufficiently that the ordered state expressed by the term kosmos embraces and requires structure [taxis]. He makes this particularly clear at 506e1 [taxeî ara tetagmenon ti kai kekosmêmenon]. Irwin refers to Socrates' 'apparent assumption that these two terms are equivalent' (1979, p.214). In fact, Socrates uses taxis to explain precisely what he means by kosmos rather than as an equivalent term.

Socrates' account of aretê as an ordered state of soul emerges just at the point in the *Gorgias* where a model of aretê founded on hedonism has been shown to be untenable. However, while offering an alternative to Calliclean aretê (and thus to the metrêtikê technê), it retains one of its key features, namely its integral relationship with technê. Socrates still presents achieving aretê in our lives as dependent upon and achieved through a technical ability – the ability to give a rational account [logos] of order in our lives and to put this account into practice.

There is a key difference, however, between the technê which Socrates is now proposing as the basis of aretê and the art which formed the basis of Calliclean aretê (and the metrêtikê technê). The former is practised by the politician (as Socrates makes clear at 504d5 – e4) on behalf of the individual citizen whereas the latter was practised by the individual himself. Socrates makes clear that an ordered state of soul can only be achieved by the intervention of the politician, a point which is underlined by the analogy which he draws with the doctor's intervention to restore his patient's health (505a). In contrast the maximisation of pleasure in life was achieved by the active pursuit of pleasure by the individual himself (as Callicles made clear in his conversation with Socrates at 492d – e).⁸ Similarly, in the *Protagoras*, Socrates made clear that it is down to the individual to maximise pleasure in his life through the choices he makes.

Socrates' awareness of the dialogue's progression from a model of aretê as a technê practised by individual citizens to one practised by the state through politicians on behalf of the individual is reflected in the language he uses at this stage. His language emphasises the need for restraint of the individual's actions and intervention in his life. The politician is required to restrain the satisfaction of desire (eirgein)⁹ and thus moderate (kolazein)¹⁰ the individual's actions. This requires direct intervention in the citizen's life – the politician 'applies' (prosoisei, 504d6) his speeches to each soul and 'gives' and 'takes away' from the soul (504d7 – 8). In section seven I will suggest that underpinning this development is Plato's recognition that the model of aretê he is now proposing does not offer an adequate account of

⁸ [Socrates] 'And tell me this: Do you say that a man must not restrain his appetites, if he's to be as he should be, but should let them grow as great as possible, and find fulfilment for them from anywhere at all, and that virtue is this? [Callicles] That's what I say.' (492d5 – e2, Irwin, 1979)

⁹ 505b3, b9.

¹⁰ 505b9, b11, c4.

our individual motivation to achieve a good life. As a result, the technê which is the basis of aretê in each citizen must be practised on the citizen's behalf.

5.3 Order as the 'health' of the soul

As discussed in the previous section, Socrates suggests that the ordered state which is the basis of aretê requires a structure within which one thing is fitting [prepon, 503e8] and suitable [harmottein, 503e8] to another. His description of health as the order and structure of the human body helps us to interpret what he means by this. Initially, Socrates introduces health as an example, amongst several others, of aretê as an ordered state (he also refers, at 504a – b, to the order in the work of painters, builders and shipwrights). From 504b7, however, he uses health more specifically, as a direct analogy for the aretê/order of the soul:

'Then what's the name for what comes to be in the body from structure and order?

[Callicles] I suppose you're talking about health and strength.

I am. And what's the name for what comes to be in the soul from structure and order? Try to find and say the name for this as for the body.

[Callicles] And why don't you say it yourself, Socrates?

Well, if it pleases you more, I'll say it myself. But you, if you think I speak well, agree, and if you don't, examine me, and don't give in to me. I think that the name for the structures of the body is 'healthy' from which health and the rest of bodily excellence (aretê) come to be in the body. Is that so, or isn't it?

[Callicles] It is.

And for the structures and orderings of the soul the name is 'lawful' and 'law' from which people become lawful and orderly; and these are justice and temperance. Do you say so, or not?

[Callicles] Let it be so.' (504b7 – 504d4, Irwin, 1979)

Here Socrates has moved beyond using health as an example of aretê as an ordered state to using it directly as an analogy for the aretê/order of the soul. He then proceeds to build upon and strengthen this analogy by comparing what the doctor must do to restore health in the body with what the politician must do to restore aretê in the soul of each citizen. Just as the doctor must control and restrict his patient's diet, similarly the politician must control each citizen's fulfilment of his desire for pleasure:

‘And isn’t it the same way,¹¹ my excellent man, about the soul? As long as it’s corrupt, senseless, intemperate, unjust and impious, we should restrain it from its appetites, and not allow it do anything else except what will make it better. Do you say so, or not?

[Callicles] I do.’ (505b1 – 6, Irwin, 1979)

Since Socrates establishes such a clear analogy between health as an ordered physical state and aretê as an ordered state of soul, it is helpful to refer to the treatment of health in pre-Socratic philosophy and in fifth/fourth century Greek medicine, to gain a clearer insight into what Socrates could mean by the order which, he suggests, is the basis of human aretê. The pre-Socratic philosopher and physician, Alcmaeon of Croton,¹² conceived health as a structured and ordered state, describing it as an equality [isonomia] of powers [dunameis] and a proportionate [summetron] mixture [krasis] of ingredients:

‘Alcmeon taught that what preserves health is equality between the powers – moist and dry, cold and hot, bitter and sweet and the rest – and the prevalence of one of them produces disease, for the prevalence of either is destructive. The active cause of disease is excess of heat or cold, the occasion of it is surfeit or insufficiency of nourishment, the seat of it blood, marrow or the brain. Disease may also be engendered by external causes such as waters or local environment or exhaustion or torture or the like. Health on the other hand is the blending of the qualities in proper measure [summetron].’ (Aetius v, 30, 1 - Diels-Kranz 24B4 - trans. Guthrie, 1962, vol.1, p.346)¹³

For Alcmaeon, health is a combination [krasis] of required ingredients, each with a specific power/capacity and each present in the quantity required to promote the health of the whole.¹⁴ Maintaining health involves avoiding an excess or deficiency of any individual power. The application and development of this concept of health in practical Greek medicine is perhaps clearest in the Hippocratic Work *The Nature of*

¹¹ ‘The same way’ [ho autos tropos] refers directly to the doctor’s actions to maintain his patient’s health and reinforces the analogy between health in the body and aretê in the soul.

¹² Who probably wrote in the early fifth century (Kirk, Raven & Schofield, 1983, p.139 n.1).

¹³ Guthrie (1962, p.345) suggests that, while the text is in indirect speech and includes language which suggests Peripatetic and Stoic influence, there is no reason to doubt that the theory it expresses is Alcmaeon’s own.

¹⁴ For Alcmaeon, equality of powers [isonomia] was the key to health and the basis of the proportioned [summetron] mixture which constitutes health. He argued that each of the powers which constituted health needed to be present equally within the body.

Man.¹⁵ The writer suggests that health is the state in which the constituent humours are present in the correct proportion to each other, both in strength and in quantity, and are mixed together:

‘The human body contains blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile. These are the things that make up its constitution and cause its pains and health. Health is primarily that state in which these constituent substances are in the correct proportion to each other, both in strength and quantity, and are well mixed. Pain occurs when one of the substances presents either a deficiency or an excess, or is separated in the body and not mixed with the others. It is inevitable that, when one of these is separated from the rest and stands by itself, not only the part from which it has come but also that where it collects and is present in excess should become diseased, and because it contains too much of the particular substance causes pain and distress.’ (*The Nature of Man* 4, Lloyd ed. 1978, trans. Chadwick & Mann)

The author of *The Nature of Man* uses and develops¹⁶ the key aspects of Alcmaeon’s model of health, namely:

- the portrayal of health as a combination of the right type of ingredients, each with a specific function/power;
- the requirement for each of these ingredients to be present in the right quantities, avoiding any deficiency or excess.

Socrates’ depiction of health as the order/structure (which amount to aretê) of the human body may reflect the influence of this contemporary concept of health as a proportioned mixture of powers. Particular evidence of this influence is present in Socrates’ description of the way in which a doctor maintains health in the body by controlling the quantity of food and drink a patient can have:

‘Yes, for what’s the benefit, Callicles, of giving lots of the most pleasant food or drink or anything else to a sick body in a wretched condition, which won’t help it one bit

¹⁵ Which probably dates from around 400BC (see Guthrie, 1962 vol. 1, p.58).

¹⁶ Alcmaeon’s model of health is developed by the author of *The Nature of Man* in three main ways: (i) The elements of health are physiological rather than cosmological, i.e. they are not the same elements which constitute the order of the cosmos. (ii) He refers to the strength as well as to the quantity of the ingredients. (iii) He adds the requirement for the ingredients to be well-mixed.

more than the opposite method on the right account, and will help even less? Is that so?

[Callicles] Let it be so.

Yes; for I suppose it's no profit for a man to live with bodily wretchedness; in that condition you must live wretchedly too. Isn't that so?

[Callicles] Yes.

And don't the doctors mostly allow a healthy man to fulfil his appetites, for instance to eat and drink as much as he wants when he's hungry or thirsty? And don't they practically never allow a sick man to fill himself with what he has an appetite for? Don't you also agree with this much?

[Callicles] I do.' (504e6 – 505a11, Irwin, 1979)

Alcmaeon regarded the quantity of food and drink which a patient received as one of the key factors responsible for maintaining the balanced mixture of powers required for health.¹⁷ This principle was incorporated into practical Greek medicine and is often referred to by Hippocratic authors.¹⁸

While Socrates does not make explicit in the *Gorgias* the identity of the dunameis which form the basis of aretê in the soul, I would suggest that their identity does become clear in the *Republic*, when Socrates discusses the balance between three specific dunameis within the soul – the rational, appetitive and spirited. The *Gorgias* prepares the ground for this by:

- (i) identifying order in the soul as the basis of human aretê;
- (ii) using health to help the reader understand what this order might look like.

Health as an ordered mixture of required 'ingredients', present in the right proportion to each other, would be something with which many readers would be familiar. By introducing this concept as an analogy for aretê, Socrates prepares the ground for an exploration in the *Republic* of how a similar state of proportion is achieved within the soul and thus reflected in living our lives.

¹⁷ 'the occasion of it [disease] is surfeit or insufficiency of nourishment' (Diels Kranz 24B4).

¹⁸ For example:

- *Regimen for Health* I: 'The ordinary man should adopt the following regimen. During the winter, he should eat as much as possible...When spring comes, he should take more to drink, increasing the quantity.....' (Lloyd ed., 1978, trans. Chadwick & Mann)
- *Aphorisms* Section 2 (4): 'Neither a surfeit of food nor of fasting is good, nor anything else which exceeds the measure of nature.' (Lloyd ed., 1978, trans. Chadwick & Mann)

5.4 Achieving a healthy (ordered) soul

In the *Gorgias*, however, Socrates is concerned not so much with identifying the individual dunameis that constitute the right order [kosmos] in the soul as with exploring how, in practical terms, an ordered state of soul is created. He is concerned with the type of wisdom which the politician must exercise on our behalf, in order for us to achieve an ordered state of soul. This reflects Socrates' immediate need to respond to Callicles' claim that a good life is characterised by the wisdom (and courage) to maximise the amount of pleasure we experience through desire satisfaction. It also reflects Socrates' recognition of the need to provide a practical alternative to his own account, in the *Protagoras*, of a good life as one devoted to the maximisation of pleasure through the metrêtikê technê.

In maintaining a focus in the *Gorgias* upon identifying the type of wisdom which is sufficient for a good life, Socrates continues the project which he began in the *Protagoras* – to sketch the type of wisdom which would be sufficient for us to achieve aretê in our lives. Furthermore, as discussed earlier in this chapter (5.2) he continues to present the wisdom which underpins aretê as a technê, as he did in the *Protagoras*. In the *Gorgias*, however, Socrates suggests that aretê is the technical ability to give a rational account [logos] of order in our lives and to put this account into practice.

In the previous section, I discussed Socrates' use of health as an analogy for the ordered state which he is proposing as the basis of aretê. From 504e6 he builds upon this analogy by using the technê of medicine to explore what, in practical terms, the politician must do to create aretê in the soul of each citizen. He suggests that, just as the doctor restricts the freedom of his patients to eat and drink what they desire (504e6 – 10), so the politician must restrict desire satisfaction in the disorderly soul (505b1 – 5). Similarly, just as the doctor allows a healthy person the freedom to eat and drink what he wants (505a6 – 10), so the politician can allow those who have already achieved an ordered soul the freedom to satisfy their desires.¹⁹ Thus it is by controlling an individual's freedom to satisfy his desires that the politician maintains or restores aretê.

¹⁹ Socrates does not specifically state this conclusion, but it is implicit in the analogy.

Furthermore, it is reasonable to assume that, although Socrates does not actually mention pleasure, he is talking specifically about controlling the satisfaction of our desire *for pleasure*. Throughout their discussion, Calicles has argued that a good life depends upon our maximising our desire for pleasure and then indiscriminately pursuing the fulfilment of every desire. So, in arguing against Calicles' model of a good life and proposing that it is better for us to have a restriction imposed on our personal freedom to satisfy our desires, we can assume that it is still desire for pleasure that is the subject of discussion. In one sense this creates some unity between Caliclean hedonism and the model which Socrates is proposing, since Socrates is still presenting aretê as concerned with pleasure in our lives. The difference is, however, that for Socrates it is concerned with controlling the amount of pleasure we experience rather than with the maximisation of pleasure in our lives. This is the technê which he describes from 504d5 – e4:

'Then won't that rhetor, the craftsman, the good one, look to these things²⁰ when he applies whatever speeches he makes to souls, and when he applies all his actions to them, and when he gives whatever he gives [kai dôron ean ti didô dôsei], and when he takes away whatever he takes away [kai ean ti aphairêtai aphairêsetai]? He'll always have his mind on this; to see that the souls of the citizens acquire justice and get rid of injustice, and that they acquire temperance and get rid of intemperance and that they acquire the rest of virtue and get rid of vice. Do you agree or not?' (504d5 – e4, Irwin, 1979)

Dodds (1959, p.330) suggests that, in this passage, Socrates is 'contrasting the actual with the ideal, politics as it is with what politics might become if politicians were philosophers.' He suggests that, in his reference to the politician 'giving' and taking away' from the soul, Socrates 'is presumably thinking on the one hand of payment for various forms of public service, on the other of taxation and leitourgai, and is saying that fiscal policy should be governed by social policy and should not be treated as a vote-catching expedient.'

While the reference to a dôron at 505c7 does support Dodds' view that the passage is talking about payment and reward, I would suggest that 504d5 – e4 should be primarily interpreted as a development of the analogy between physical health and

²⁰ That is, to the need to achieve a state of structure and order in the soul, which will manifest itself in justice and temperance (504d1 -3).

aretê in the soul.²¹ It establishes the politician as the craftsman who is responsible, through the practical actions he undertakes within the state (such as payment for public services), for creating order in the soul. This enables Socrates to draw an analogy with the doctor (who is the craftsman responsible for health in the body).²²

My interpretation of this passage as an integral part of an analogy between physical health and aretê in the soul avoids some difficulties which Dodds' interpretation presents. Firstly, it avoids the question of why Socrates should suddenly refer to the financial policy of the state when there seems no particular relevance to doing so within the context of a discussion about achieving an ordered soul. Secondly, it avoids the difficulty of why, if he is only talking about financial policy, Socrates should refer, as he does, to the politician giving and taking away specifically from the *soul*. My interpretation enables us to read the passage in the context of an analogy with health which immediately precedes and follows it (as Socrates indicates we should do by the connective 'ti gar'). It does, however, raise a different question - what is Socrates suggesting that the politician 'gives' and 'takes away' from the soul? Socrates explains what the politician's role involves from 504e6. He makes clear that it is by controlling individual's freedom to satisfy his desires that the politician maintains or restores aretê. Just as the doctor restricts the freedom of his patients to eat and drink what they desire (504e6 – 10), so the politician must restrict desire satisfaction in the disorderly soul (505b1 – 5). Similarly, just as the doctor allows a healthy person the freedom to eat and drink what he wants (505a6 – 10), so the politician can allow those who have already achieved an ordered soul the freedom to satisfy their desires.²³ The politician must control desire satisfaction for each citizen until the point when he is able to do this for himself. In doing so, he creates the ordered state of soul which constitutes aretê. Yet why does Socrates introduce the concept of 'giving' and 'taking away' to his description of the politician's role? Surely it would have been sufficient for him to say that the politician must allow or restrict desire satisfaction. It is, in fact, clear from the text that Socrates refers to the actions of the politician as 'giving' and 'taking away' from the soul in order to make the point that the soul both acquires [gignêtai en] and gets rid of [apallattêtai] something as a

²¹ Socrates' description of the politician's art at 504d5 – e4 comes immediately after his introduction of the analogy between physical health and aretê in the soul.

²² Immediately after his description of the politician's art at 504d5 – 8, Socrates introduces an analogy between the doctor and the politician. His introduction of this analogy with the connective 'gar' (504e6) suggests that he believes that his previous statement has established his right to draw this analogy.

²³ Socrates does not specifically state this conclusion, but it is implicit in the analogy.

result of these actions - it acquires aretê and gets rid of vice.²⁴ In controlling desire satisfaction, the politician gives aretê to the soul and takes away vice.

5.5 The right amount of pleasure

In the previous chapter, I discussed how Calliclean aretê and the metrêtikê technê are both founded on the premise that all pleasure is good and that aretê, therefore, consists of the maximisation of pleasure in our lives. I explored how Socrates, through his discussion with Calicles (from 495e – 497d), demonstrates that this results in a contradictory account of a good life where, in order to maximise the pleasure obtained from the satisfaction of our desire, we must also maximise the pain of desire.²⁵

So, how does Socrates' alternative account of aretê as the ability to achieve an ordered state of soul respond to this difficulty? At 504e6 – 10 (quoted above), Socrates shows how, in the case of health, giving a person large quantities of the most pleasant food or drink [sitia polla didonai kai ta hêdista ê pota ê all'hotioun, 504e7 – 8) is as harmful to the body as starving it (tounantion, 504e9). The clear implication of this, although Socrates does not state it directly, is that what is required by the body is the *right amount* of food and drink to maintain the ordered physical state that constitutes health. The role of the doctor is, therefore, to ensure that the sick patient gets the right amount of food and drink to restore his health. This is achieved (as described at 505a6 - 10) by controlling the patient's diet until, when healthy, he is able to do this for himself.

Socrates then draws a direct analogy with the soul and suggests (505b1 – 5, quoted above) that, in order to achieve kosmos (aretê) in the soul of each citizen, the politician must intervene to control desire satisfaction in the same way that the doctor intervenes in the patient's diet to make him healthy. Thus the politician must prevent each citizen from experiencing an excess of pleasure (the equivalent of too much

²⁴ A point which Socrates makes three times at 504d5 – e4.

²⁵ Underpinning this argument is:

(i) a definition of pleasure as the *process* (rather than the *state*) of desire satisfaction. Socrates shows, through his conversation with Calicles, that this definition is required by any model of aretê such as Calicles', which is concerned with the maximisation of pleasure.

(ii) an assumption that desire is painful. Socrates makes an association between desire and lack and then takes this one stage further by assuming that the desire which is the natural result of a lack has the same characteristic (i.e. painfulness) as the lack itself. He does not argue for this but Calicles accepts it without question.

food and drink) or from being deprived of pleasure entirely (the equivalent of starving them). Instead, he must ensure that they experience the right amount of pleasure to create an ordered state of soul.

In this way, Socrates responds to one of the key difficulties which he has highlighted with Calliclean aretê - its objective of maximising pleasure in our lives. He replaces this with the objective of achieving the right amount of pleasure. Inherent in this objective is the principle that not all pleasure (desire fulfilment) is good and not all pain (unfulfilled desire) is bad. We need only cultivate desire (pain) and pursue desire fulfilment (pleasure) to the extent that each will result in a good life. In both cases, we are actively pursuing what is good. So, we are no longer faced with a contradictory account of a good life where we must maximise what is bad (painful) in order to achieve what is good (the maximum amount of pleasure).

So, if Socrates now envisages aretê as a technê which is concerned with achieving the right amount of pleasure in our lives, is he still presenting it as an art of measurement? It is, after all, still concerned with the quantification of pleasure - albeit against a different standard (the right amount, rather than the most). In fact, it is noticeable that Socrates does not refer at all to the need for the politician to measure or quantify accurately the amount of pleasure in our lives. One reason for this may be that Socrates' interlocutor is an aristocrat who is disdainful of manual crafts (as he makes clear at 491a) and would be likely to regard measurement as one of these. In presenting an alternative to Callicles' model of aretê, Socrates presents it in Calliclean terms – as the art of a statesman rather than as a practical craft.

There may, however, be other reasons why, at this point, Socrates does not present aretê as an art of measurement. In suggesting that aretê is concerned with achieving the 'right amount' of pleasure rather than 'the most', Socrates now has the challenge of explaining how we actually determine the right amount of pleasure and, furthermore, how we can measure accurately against this standard. His reluctance to refer to measurement at this stage may well point to his recognition of the practical questions he has yet to answer.

5.6 Good and bad pleasures

In applying the analogy of health to the role of the politician in bringing order to the soul, Socrates emphasises the quantitative aspect of the technê he is proposing as

the basis of aretê – namely the ability to ensure that the amount of pleasure in the lives of citizens is controlled. However, in doing so, he introduces a qualitative dimension to the technê in that pleasure is only good to the extent that it is present in the right quantity to contribute to order in the soul - excessive pleasure (or too little pleasure) is bad. By introducing a distinction between good and bad pleasures, Socrates sets apart the model of aretê which he is proposing from Calliclean aretê and from his own metrêtikê technê (both of which were based on the principle that all pleasure is good). Furthermore, in distinguishing between good and bad pleasures, Socrates overcomes one of the key difficulties which he highlighted with Calliclean aretê. From *Gorgias* 497d – 499a²⁶ Socrates demonstrates that, in treating all pleasure as good, Callicles is forced to value human qualities (cowardice and ignorance)²⁷ which, according to his own account of aretê, are bad. By acknowledging that we should distinguish between good and bad pleasures on the basis of whether they are present in the right quantity to bring order to the soul, Socrates allows us to maintain courage, wisdom and other qualities within our model of a good life. All of these will be qualities of an ordered soul, and pleasure will only be good to the extent that it is present in the right quantity to contribute to maintaining or restoring this order. Socrates makes clear at 505b1 – 5 (quoted above) that worthlessness [ponêria], foolishness [anoia], intemperance [akolasia], injustice [adikia] and impiety [anosiotês] have no place within an ordered soul and that pleasure should not be allowed (i.e. is bad) if it (is present in a quantity which) contributes to any of these. Thus the pleasures of the coward and the fool are eliminated from this model of aretê and a key difficulty with Calliclean aretê is addressed.

However, the analogy with health makes clear that the qualitative distinction between good and bad pleasures is firmly based upon a quantitative standard. Just as food and drink is judged good or bad for the body depending upon whether or not it is taken in the right quantity to maintain or restore health, so, by analogy, pleasure is judged good or bad depending upon whether it is present in the right quantity to maintain or restore aretê. In this way, Socrates ensures that he retains one of the strengths of Calliclean aretê and of the metrêtikê technê, namely their potential, through their foundation on quantification of pleasure, to bring determinacy and practical accuracy to the decisions we make about how we live.

²⁶ As discussed in chapter 4.4.

²⁷ Because cowardly and foolish acts can be a source of pleasure.

5.7 Abandoning the metrêtikê technê?

I have attempted to show in this chapter that the alternative Socrates proposes to Calliclean aretê - his account of aretê as the ability to achieve kosmos in our lives - does not represent his abandonment of his own sketch of aretê as the metrêtikê technê (which shared the key features of Calliclean aretê) but rather his refinement of it. This alternative account continues to present aretê as a technê of quantifying pleasure in our lives, while refining those aspects which, through his discussion with Callicles, have been identified as untenable. It differs from the metrêtikê technê and from Calliclean aretê in its objective of achieving the right amount of pleasure (rather than the most) in our lives and in its underpinning assumption that not all pleasure is good.

Callicles is unable to live with the practical implication of this account - namely the requirement to restrict the fulfilment of his desire for pleasure if he is to achieve a good life. As a result, Socrates is forced to conclude the argument to establish this model of aretê on his own – from 506c he has to argue with a hypothetical Callicles as the real one refuses to join in. It is hardly surprising that Callicles, as the ultimate hedonist, doesn't much like a model of aretê that requires him to restrict the amount of pleasure he can have. However, it is important to remember that Calliclean hedonism and the metrêtikê technê have the same key features. In providing an alternative to Calliclean hedonism, Socrates is also offering an alternative to his own model of aretê. Callicles' resistance to this model may be entirely in character but I would suggest that it also reflects the fact that the model Socrates is proposing does not, as it stands, present a viable alternative to the metrêtikê technê. From 506c Socrates is arguing with himself in more ways than one. Not only has his interlocutor withdrawn from the debate, but Socrates needs to convince himself of the alternative account he has proposed. The conversation he conducts with himself is a powerful way of showing that he needs to convince himself just as much as Callicles.

Callicles' reaction to Socrates' account makes clear what the problem is. He withdraws his cooperation at the point when Socrates reaches the conclusion that a good life requires the restriction (by the politician) of satisfaction of the desires which we are naturally motivated to pursue:

'Then being tempered is better for the soul than intemperance, which you just now thought was better.

[Callicles] I don't know what you're saying, Socrates. Ask someone else' (505b11 - c2, Irwin, 1979)

Socrates' failure to convince Callicles highlights the difficulty with offering this model of aretê as an alternative to the metrêtikê technê. One of the strengths of the metrêtikê technê was its practical account (founded upon hedonism) of the many's motivation to achieve a good life. In chapter two, I explored how the hedonism on which the metrêtikê technê is founded explains why the many will always do what is good once they have accurately identified it. Socrates made this clear in the *Protagoras* by establishing that:

- Pleasure is the only thing that the many pursue as a goal in their actions;²⁸
- They actively pursue this goal throughout their lives.²⁹

Socrates challenges the many on three successive occasions³⁰ to name another goal within their lives, and emphasises that they are unable to do so. The recurring phrase 'allo ti' [telos] is used to drive home the point that there is nothing else which motivates the actions of the many.

However, Socrates is now offering a different model of aretê - as the art of achieving a state of order within the soul. If this technê is to be sufficient for aretê, Socrates must demonstrate that it is underpinned by a practical account of our motivation to achieve an ordered state of soul. In other words, he must demonstrate that, once we recognise what an ordered state of soul entails, we will be consistently motivated to pursue this. Callicles' withdrawal from the conversation at the point when Socrates spells out the practical implications of the model he is proposing highlights Socrates' failure to do this. While Callicles has accepted in principle that not all pleasure is

²⁸ Socrates emphasises that pleasure is the only goal [telos] the many have and he describes it as the telos of their actions three times - at *Protagoras* 354b7, d2 and d8.

²⁹ Socrates makes clear in the *Protagoras* that the many's pursuit of pleasure is consistent in the sense that they are *always active in pursuit of this goal* - there are never occasions where they choose not to act at all and to have a rest from pursuing anything. The language Socrates uses demonstrates that the many actively pursue this goal throughout their lives. Pleasure is not a goal about which they are half-hearted; they focus all their attention upon it (apoblepein²⁹ - 354c1, d2, d8), pursue it (diôkein - 354c4) and flee from (pheugein - 354c4) any pain which will prevent them from achieving it.

³⁰ 354b7 - c2, 354d1 - 3, 354d7 - e2.

good, his underlying motivation continues to be, as it always has been, to pursue as much pleasure as he can. Unlike the many in the *Protagoras*, Callicles is more than capable of citing another goal than the one which Socrates is now proposing as the basis of a good life. Socrates has not given him a good enough reason to give up this goal, and so he withdraws from the conversation and leaves Socrates to argue with himself.

Through Callicles' withdrawal from the conversation, leaving Socrates to have a conversation with himself, Plato illustrates that Socrates needs to convince himself, just as much as Callicles, that his account of a good life is sufficient for aretê. Socrates is well aware that Callicles' honest account of his own motivation is one which he must address if he is to translate a 'theoretical' account of a good life into one which can accommodate the reality of human motivation. At 508a Socrates points out to Callicles that he hasn't noticed the importance of geometrical equality within a good life:

'You haven't noticed that geometrical equality has great power among gods and men; you think you should practise taking more, because you are heedless of geometry.' (508a4 – 8. Irwin, 1979)

While, at face value, this appears to be a criticism of Callicles' failure to recognise the importance of kosmos within a good life (and of the proportional arrangement of dunamis upon which this depends), I would suggest, it may also be a thinly-veiled criticism by Socrates of the model of aretê which he himself has presented in the *Gorgias*. Socrates may be admitting³¹ that the model fails to demonstrate to Callicles why he should give up the pleasures that he regards as important, just for the sake of achieving order and proportion in his soul and in his life (which Callicles sees as having no relevance to him). Socrates' model of aretê remains, for Callicles, no more than an irrelevant theory. In the next chapter, I will argue that, in the *Republic*, Socrates begins to address this difficulty through a distinction between real and apparent pleasures. This will enable Socrates to reinstate pleasure as the basis of his account of our motivation to live a good life.

³¹ By highlighting Callicles' lack of interest in/awareness of the geometrical principles that underpin order.

Sketching the ‘Sôtêria Tou Biou’

Plato and the Art of Measurement

Chapter 6 – Justice in the *Republic* as the Art of Measurement?

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I explored how, in the *Gorgias*, Socrates introduces a model of aretê as the ability to achieve a state of order (kosmos) in our soul. I suggested that this model responded to the difficulties which Socrates had identified with the *Protagoras*’ metrêtikê technê,¹ while retaining its essential character as a practical art of measuring pleasure in our lives.² I also pointed out, however, that a model of aretê as the ability to achieve order in the soul brings difficulties of its own. In particular, Plato shows, through Socrates’ conversation with Callicles, that this model is not supported by an adequate account of our motivation to live a good life. Callicles makes clear that it is the desire for pleasure that motivates him to act, not the desire for an ordered state of soul. In this way, Callicles highlights that Socrates’ account of aretê does not appear to take account of the reality of human motivation.

In this chapter, I turn to the *Republic* where, I suggest, Socrates reinforces and builds upon his claim in the *Gorgias* that aretê is the ability to achieve an ordered state of soul and begins to address some of the practical issues arising from this account of aretê. In section two, I outline the account of justice which Socrates puts forward in Books II – IV, where he presents individual justice as a state of unity in which there is harmonia between the different parts of the soul. I explore how this reinforces and builds upon the *Gorgias*’ account of aretê as the ability to achieve an ordered state of soul.

In section three, I discuss how, in Book V, Socrates begins to look at how, within our own lives, we can work towards achieving an ordered state of soul. I focus on a

¹ I suggested in chapter 4 that, through his attack on Calliclean hedonism (*Gorgias* 495e – 499b), Socrates also highlights some key weaknesses in the metrêtikê technê. The basis of my argument was that Calliclean hedonism shares the same essential features as the metrêtikê technê.

² It differs from the metrêtikê technê, however, in that it is concerned with achieving the right amount of pleasure in our lives rather than with maximising pleasure.

passage in Book V (471c – 474c) where he justifies the value of the account of justice he has developed in Books II – IV and suggests that it provides an illustration – a paradeigma – which we can use in living our own lives. Socrates argues that his account has value as an illustration of an ideal against which each citizen can compare the reality of his life and that of his fellow citizens. I argue that, while Book V is often regarded as marking a transition from a practical account of justice to an account founded on knowledge of absolute truths (gained through a life devoted to philosophy), it actually has a very practical focus. It is in Book V that Socrates begins to explain how the account of justice he has already outlined has relevance and value in our own lives, and how we can use it in our own attempts to achieve aretê. We can do so by comparing ourselves in every aspect of our lives against an ideal – the ideal being an ordered state of harmonia in our soul - and by acting in the way which we judge will bring us closest to this ideal.

Socrates' introduction of this practical account of justice raises the question of *how* we compare our lives against the paradeigma he has described. In section four, I suggest that Socrates alludes to a process of measurement of our lives against it. The language he uses in Book V (471c – 474c) implies that there is a need for objective quantification of our relationship to this paradeigma – in other words, for the measurement of our lives against it. It is important to recognise, however, that an 'art of measurement' is only alluded to within this passage of the *Republic*, rather than being introduced openly or directly. This is very different from the grand flourish that it was awarded in the *Protagoras*, and in section five I will argue that this is because Socrates is well aware of the difficulties involved in proposing measurement as the practical activity through which we achieve justice in our lives. While he remains convinced, as he has been since the *Protagoras*, of the need for an art of measurement to bring objectivity and determinacy to our pursuit of aretê, he is also well aware of the difficulties involved in applying this art to the account of justice he has proposed in the *Republic*. Firstly, he must demonstrate that we can quantify order in the soul (as a basis for measuring it). At 423b5 – c4 Socrates provides a specific example of how one aspect of justice in the state – the right size for the state - *can* be judged using the art of measurement. I suggest that Socrates uses this example to illustrate and emphasise the potential role measurement can play in achieving justice in our lives.

In addition, there is a problem for Socrates with making a technical skill such as measurement the foundation of the ruler's ability to achieve justice in the state, within

an account of justice which emphasises the need to separate the role of the ruler from that of the productive/technical class. How can he argue that the ruler's role can be founded upon a technical skill, without compromising the principle that justice consists in each group of citizens to ta hautou prattein (433b4)? In section six, I will suggest that at 473c – e Socrates begins to address this difficulty when he claims that only by giving power to philosophers will the state succeed in putting into practice the paradeigma of justice which they have constructed. I explore the relationship between Socrates' account of justice as practical wisdom³ and his claim that it depends upon philosophical knowledge. In doing so, I refer particularly to Book VI (484c – d), a passage in which Socrates uses an analogy with art and the metaphor of sight⁴ to explain the integral relationship which he envisages between practical and philosophical wisdom. He suggests that the practical standard of justice against which we measure our lives must, if it is to enable us to live a better life, also be a standard of absolute truth [to alêthestaton, 484c7]. It can, therefore, only be understood by those who through philosophy have gained an understanding of the true nature of justice. By clarifying the dependence of the practical standard of justice by which we live our lives upon philosophical understanding of what is truly just, Socrates makes the art of measurement against this standard a very different art from that which he proposed in the *Protagoras*. It is no longer a 'tecnica humile'⁵ which can do no more than make accurate calculations based upon the best standard for a good life that the many could come up with. He makes clear that, when we measure our lives against this standard, we are putting into practice an understanding of what is truly good. To this extent, in the *Republic*, Socrates begins to strengthen the art of measurement and to raise its status.

There remains, however, the difficulty of what motivates us to practise this art of measurement, when it requires us to restrict the satisfaction of our desires, thus controlling the amount of pleasure in our lives. Callicles highlighted this difficulty in the *Gorgias*, by making clear that his motivation was to pursue as much pleasure as possible rather than to restrict the amount of pleasure in his life. Glaucon and Adeimantus restate this difficulty in *Republic* II. In section seven I explore how, in the *Republic*, Socrates begins to develop a solution to this problem by the introduction, in Book IX, of a distinction between real and unreal pleasures. By making this

³ That is, the knowledge of a practical standard [paradeigma] for a good life, and of how to measure our lives against this standard.

⁴ Both of which he also used at 471 – 4.

⁵ As it was described by Capra (1997, p.274 ff.).

distinction, Socrates is able to claim that the just life – a life devoted to the pursuit of an ordered soul – is the pleasantest life. Thus he rises to the challenge presented by hedonism on its own terms – Callicles (or Glaucon and Adeimantus) should be motivated to pursue an ordered state of soul because in doing so they will maximise the (real) pleasure in their lives. Equally, in pursuing the maximum amount of (real) pleasure in their lives, they will be pursuing a good/just life. So, it finally becomes clear in Book IX how Socrates envisages we can objectively measure our lives against the paradeigma of a just soul (as he hinted in Book V that we could). We can do so by measuring (real) pleasure in our lives - in other words by applying the metrêtikê technê.

6.2 Justice as harmonia of the soul

The *Republic*, like the *Gorgias*, explores the nature of justice. In Book I, after some initial attempts at a definition by Cephalus and Polemarchus, Thrasymachus takes over as interlocutor and puts forward the thesis that justice is nothing other than the interests of the most powerful in society – in other words that it is simply the code of behaviour which the powerful enforce to ensure that their own interests are served. When Thrasymachus' argument is challenged by Socrates, Glaucon and Adeimantus restate his case for him. In Book II, Glaucon claims that justice is a kind of compromise which citizens make (either willingly or through compulsion) because the functioning of any society depends upon this. Each citizen's natural instinct, however, is to pursue his own interests and this is ultimately what will make him happiest and most successful. Adeimantus supports him by giving some examples of the reasons why citizens act justly – either in hope of a reward (such as good reputation) or through fear of punishment. They leave Socrates with the challenge of showing how justice is, in its own right, better for us than injustice.

To respond to this challenge, Socrates moves (368ff.) from discussing justice in the individual to justice in the state. In doing so, he identifies three different classes of citizens (businessmen, auxiliaries and guardians) and suggests that justice in the state requires each of these classes to carry out and confine themselves to their own function. Their doing so is ultimately in the best interest of the state as a whole:

'So, meddling and exchange among these three classes is the greatest harm that can happen to the city and would rightly be called the worst evil one could do to it.' (434b8 – c2, Reeve, 2004)

‘That, then, is what injustice is. But let’s put it in reverse: the opposite of this – when the moneymaking, auxiliary, and guardian class each do their own work in the city – is justice, isn’t it, and makes the city just? (434c7 – 10, Reeve, 2004)

In Book IV, Socrates draws a parallel between justice in the state and in the individual soul. Individual justice is presented as an ordered state (harmonia) between three specific dunameis within the soul – the rational, appetitive and spirited. Socrates provides a detailed description of how the man who seeks to live a just life can achieve a state of harmonia within his soul:

‘And in truth justice is, it seems, something of this sort. However, it isn’t concerned with someone’s doing his own externally, but with what is inside him, what is truly himself and his own. One who is just does not allow any part of himself to do the work of another part or allow the various classes within him to meddle with each other. He regulates well what is really his own and rules himself. He puts himself in order, is his own friend, and harmonizes the three parts of himself like three limiting notes in a musical scale – high, low, and middle. He binds together those parts and any others there may be in between, and from having been many things he becomes entirely one, moderate and harmonious. Only then does he act. And when he does anything, whether acquiring wealth, taking care of his body, engaging in politics, or in private contracts – in all of these, he believes that the action is just and fine that preserves this inner harmony and helps achieve it, and calls it so, and regards as wisdom the knowledge that oversees such actions. And he believes that the action that destroys this harmony is unjust, and calls it so, and regards the belief that oversees it as ignorance’. (*Republic IV*, 443c9 – 444a2, Grube, rev. Reeve, 1997)

Socrates’ account of individual justice in the *Republic* reinforces the *Gorgias*’ account of aretê as the ability to achieve a state of order [kosmos] within the soul. However, it not only reinforces but also builds upon this account by making clear how this order manifests itself (as harmonia) and identifies its component parts – the rational, appetitive and spirited. In this respect it goes further than the *Gorgias* which, while identifying kosmos as the basis of aretê, did not specify the ingredients of this ordered state. Nor did it explain how we can recognise kosmos in the soul. While, in the *Gorgias*, Socrates used health as an analogy for an ordered state of soul, he did not explore how we recognise a ‘healthy’ soul. Socrates makes clear in the *Republic* that we can recognise it by a state of unity and harmony between the different

dunameis within the soul – a state which he compares to the harmony between notes in a musical scale.

6.3 A Paradeigma of Harmonia

In Book V (471c ff.), Glaucon criticises Socrates because he has not demonstrated that his account of a just state (in Books II – IV) can ever be achieved in practice. Socrates' defence is that, even if this state can never be achieved in practice, it serves as an illustration of what a just individual would be like if he were to exist – an illustration against which we can compare our own lives:⁶

'So, it was in order to have a model [paradeigma] that we were inquiring into the nature of justice itself and of the completely just man, supposing he could exist, and what he would be like if he did; and similarly with injustice and the most unjust man. We thought that by seeing how they seemed to us to stand with regard to happiness and its opposite, we would also be compelled to agree about ourselves as well: that the one who was most like them would have a fate most like theirs. But we were not doing this in order to demonstrate that it is possible for these men to exist.' (*Republic* V, 472c4 – d2, Reeve, 2004)

Here Socrates describes the account of justice in the state which he has developed in Books II – IV as a paradeigma – an illustration of an ideal. He compares his own illustration of a just state with an artist's illustration [paradeigma] of the finest and most beautiful individual:

'Do you think, then, that someone would be any less good a painter if he painted a model [paradeigma] of what the most beautiful human being would be like, and rendered everything in the picture perfectly well [hikanôs], but could not demonstrate that such a man could actually exist?

[Glaucon] I certainly don't' (472d4 – 8, Reeve, 2004).

In drawing this comparison, Socrates is making the point that an illustration of an ideal can have real value in our lives. In the case of the artist's picture, Socrates does

⁶ Glaucon's criticism is that Socrates' account of a just state is not necessarily achievable in practice. In reply, Socrates defends his account of a just individual ('what the completely just man would be like'), rather than his account of a just state. Presumably he believes his defence applies to both accounts and he does, from 473b4, demonstrate its application to the state.

not state explicitly what its value would be. Instead, he points to the evidence that we do, in reality, value an illustration of the ideal – a fact which is reflected in our praise and admiration of artists. Socrates does, however, explain how his own paradeigma has value. In making clear what the life of a completely just (happy) individual is like, it enables us to compare ourselves against this picture and to determine how close we are to a perfectly just (happy) life and how just we are in comparison to our fellow citizens. Thus Socrates presents the account of justice he has given as having practical value in helping us to achieve aretê in our lives. So, is he justified in making this claim? I would suggest that the account of a just individual which he has developed in Books II – IV has practical relevance to our lives in three main ways:

- (i) It illustrates how the individual must act in order to be just; he must follow the guidance of reason in all his actions and subject all other motivation to reason.⁷
- (ii) It provides this illustration in terms which are relevant and real to the individual – in terms of experiences he recognises, namely the experiences of desire and thumos.
- (iii) It, therefore, gives the individual a meaningful⁸ picture to which he can relate and against which he can compare the reality of his life.

In fact, Glaucon has asked Socrates to justify that his account of a just *state* – not of a just individual – is of any value. Socrates' claim, however, that his account provides a practical illustration of excellence would apply just as well to his account of a just state, which also meets the three criteria outlined above:

- (i) It describes what the state must do to be just; it must ensure that each group of citizens fulfils its own proper role within the state.⁹
- (ii) It describes this in terms which are relevant and real to the state – in terms of the roles of and relationship between familiar and recognisable groups of citizens (namely those who provide for, defend and rule the state).
- (iii) It, therefore, offers a practical illustration of justice to which the state can aspire and against which it can compare reality.

⁷ At 443e, for example, Socrates states that: '...in all of these, he [the just man] believes that the action is just and fine that preserves this inner harmony and helps achieve it, and calls it so, and regards as wisdom the knowledge that oversees such actions...' (443e4 – 444a1, Grube, rev. Reeve, 1997)

⁸ It is meaningful because it is expressed in terms which are relevant to the individual's own life and experiences.

⁹ For example, at 433e: 'Therefore, from this point of view, also, the having and doing of one's own would be accepted as justice.' (433e10 – 434a1. Grube, rev. Reeve, 1997).

The term paradeigma is used by Socrates later in the *Republic*¹⁰ to refer to a standard for what is absolutely true - a standard which can only be grasped by those who have philosophical understanding of the truth. It becomes clear, furthermore, that, in order to gain this understanding, philosophers must turn their attention away from the sensible world. In 471 - 4, however, Socrates uses paradeigma to describe an illustration of the ideal which is practical and relevant to the world we live in and which we can use in living our lives. By comparing the reality of an individual life against this practical ideal, we can evaluate the extent to which this life is just or unjust. Aretê requires the ability to compare ourselves against an ideal picture of harmonia, in every aspect of our lives, and to act in the way which we judge will bring us closest to this ideal.

Many commentators have noted the extent to which the language Socrates uses in Book V alludes to a model of justice founded on knowledge of separated Forms.¹¹ For this reason, 471 - 4 is often regarded as marking a transition from a practical account of justice to an account founded on knowledge of absolute truths, gained through a life devoted to philosophy.¹² Few commentators have acknowledged, however, that the passage actually puts forward a very practical model of aretê, based on the comparison of our lives against an ideal. Later in this chapter, I will explore the relationship between Socrates' account of justice as the ability to compare our lives against a paradeigma and his claim that justice depends upon philosophical understanding.

6.4 Measuring Harmonia?

If, as I have suggested in section three, Socrates is proposing an account of aretê as the comparison of our own lives against an ideal picture [paradeigma] of harmonia within the soul, this raises the question of *how* we compare ourselves against this ideal. In this section, I suggest that Socrates alludes to a process of measurement of

¹⁰ For example, Book VI 484c6.

¹¹ For example, Lee (1987, p.210, n.2) suggests that: 'Plato here uses, whether deliberately or not, language that recalls his Theory of Forms. Particular things 'share in' or 'partake of' (metechein) the forms which they exemplify; and the form is a pattern (paradeigma) to which particulars approximate.'

¹² Halliwell (1993, p.194) suggests that 'This section marks perhaps the most important transition in the entire *Republic*. It is a juncture which harks back to the outset of bk. 5 (for it is a final attempt to answer the question of 'possibility' which has hung over the discussion since 450c8), yet simultaneously begins a progression into what will turn out to be the great centrepiece of the dialogue, occupying the whole of books. 6 - 7: an account of the 'true philosopher' in terms which involve an extensive and ambitious scheme of metaphysical ideas.'

our lives against this paradeigma. In particular, the vocabulary he uses at 472b – c hints at the need for objective *quantification* of our relationship to this standard of excellence – in other words, for the measurement of our lives against it. Socrates suggests that we must determine who is just by considering who is closest to [eggutata, 472c1] and has the greatest share in [pleista metechêi, 472c1 - 2] the paradeigma. The person who most closely resembles the paradeigma of the just man will have a portion [moiran, 472d1] of happiness most like his.

The adjective eggus can describe either qualitative similarity or quantitative closeness (in time or distance). Although metechein is used elsewhere by Plato to describe the relationship of our lives to a metaphysical paradeigma, the same word can also mean simply to ‘have a share’ of something. I would suggest that, here, Plato carefully chooses a word which (i) describes our conformance to (share in) a practical ideal; (ii) implies, with support from the quantitative adjective [pleista], that the extent of our conformance (our share) can be quantified and measured; (iii) predicts the role of philosophical knowledge in achieving practical aretê. ‘Moirai’ traditionally describes a person’s fortune in life; their allotted portion of life (see Halliwell, 1993, p.197). The same word, however, also describes a (quantifiable) physical portion of something. By his careful juxtaposition of a series of terms that can be interpreted quantitatively, Socrates implies that the extent to which our lives are just can be quantified and measured against a paradeigma. We can objectively measure the value of (472b8) an individual life by quantifying its ‘closeness to’ (472c1), its ‘share in’ (472c1 - 2) and its ‘portion of’ (472d1) the ideal.

The majority of translations of this passage overlook the possibility that the passage alludes to quantification and measurement. If, however, we do read the passage as referring to quantitative evaluation of our lives against a paradeigma, it offers a very practical account of aretê. Interpreted in this way, Book V does not, as most commentators suggest, represent a transition away from a practical account of aretê, but, in fact, offers measurement against an ideal as a practical means of achieving aretê in our own lives.

It is possible, of course, that the language of measurement is no more than an analogy for living our lives with constant reference to a practical ideal for justice, without any necessary implication that we will *actually* be quantifying or measuring our lives against this ideal. Perhaps all Socrates intends is that we should compare our likeness to the ideally just man/state, as the basis for living a better life. He

describes the process of comparison by using the language of measurement, because it is natural to use this kind of language (in a loose sense) to describe how one thing compares against another. I might say, for example, that the meal I have just eaten was 'close to' being perfect, but I don't mean that I have measured it. Similarly, I might suggest, when recruiting a person to a job, that someone 'shares' many of the characteristics of the ideal person for the job, but I don't mean that they have a quantifiable share of these characteristics. Socrates may just be using the language of measurement in a loose, non-technical sense to describe how we evaluate our lives, without any intention that we should quantify and measure our lives.

This would, in one sense, be an easier interpretation of Socrates' use of the language of quantity in this passage – an interpretation which avoids the considerable difficulties involved in attempting to quantify how just our lives are. If we accept, however, that Socrates is using the language of measurement only as an analogy for the comparison of our lives against an ideal (rather than as the actual means of comparison) we undermine his claim that the paradeigma he has put forward in Books II - IV has real value within our lives. If Socrates' paradeigma is to have the value which he claims for it, then he must demonstrate how we can use it as a basis for living our lives. Only by adopting an objective process of comparison can we use the standard in the way Socrates envisages - to determine how I actually compare to the ideal. Without this, I may believe myself to be very like the 'ideal' person in the artist's illustration but this will only reflect my subjective opinion on (a) which criteria are relevant to judging likeness in this particular case and (b) the extent to which I meet these criteria. If Socrates' paradeigma is to fulfil the role he affords it in achieving a better life, then we must have a means of using it objectively within our lives. Otherwise, in referring to the paradeigma in living our lives, we will be vulnerable to the 'power of appearances'¹³ just as the many were, in the *Protagoras*, in their attempts to pursue what was most pleasant (until they acquired the art of measurement). Furthermore, Socrates will be entirely vulnerable to Glaucon's criticism that his account of justice has no practical use. Within this passage, by consistently choosing the language of quantification to describe the process of comparison against a paradeigma, Socrates implies that measurement can provide the objectivity we need. In doing so, I would suggest, he keeps the door open for a model of aretê founded upon measurement and for the possibility (as he originally

¹³ Cf. *Protagoras* 356d4.

suggested in the *Protagoras*) that such a model may still be the ‘salvation of our lives’.

6.5 An Art of Measurement?

Yet if, as I have suggested above, measurement continues to have a role in the model of aretê Socrates is proposing in the *Republic*, why does he only allude to it? I would suggest that this is because Socrates remains aware of the practical issues he must address before he is in a position to present measurement as the ‘salvation of our lives’. In part, his failure to refer directly to an art of measurement points to his recognition of how hard it is to explain how we can, in practice, quantify or measure how far we have achieved harmonia in our lives. For this to be possible, harmonia in the soul would itself need to be expressible in quantitative terms. However, by comparing harmonia in the soul directly to the harmony of the notes in a musical scale [443c9 – 444a2, quoted above], Socrates draws a direct parallel with a type of harmonia that the reader *would* be likely associate with quantification – the harmony of notes within a musical scale.¹⁴ By referring specifically to the ‘three limiting notes in a musical scale’, Socrates reminds the reader of the Pythagorean¹⁵ theory of the tetractys.¹⁶ This theory would be likely to be familiar - Philolaus, the key Pythagorean philosopher in the second half of the fifth century had discussed in detail how musical harmony was quantifiable.¹⁷ In Socrates’ reference to the ‘limiting’ notes in the scale, he also recalls (whether intentionally or not) Philolaus’ advocacy of the limited and

¹⁴ ‘Certainly by the time of Plato and Aristotle, the application of number theory to music was a central preoccupation of the Pythagoreans...’ (Kirk, Raven & Schofield, 1984 p.234).

¹⁵ That is, the theory of the Pythagorean school rather than of Pythagoras himself. Kirk, Raven & Schofield (1984, p. 234) point out that ‘explicit testimony that Pythagoras discovered that the fundamental musical relations in the octave can be represented by simple numerical ratios is found only in late and untrustworthy authors who may depend ultimately (but not therefore credibly) on Xenocrates (fr.9 Heinze, Porphyry in Ptol. 30, 2ff.)’.

¹⁶ ‘The tetractys is a certain number which, being composed of the first four numbers, produces the most perfect number, ten. For one and two and three and four come to be ten. This number is the first tetractys, and is called the source of ever flowing nature since according to them the entire cosmos is ordered according to harmonia, and harmonia is a system of three concords – the fourth, the fifth and the octave – and the proportions of these three concords are found in the aforementioned four numbers (Sextus Empiricus, Against the Mathematicians 7.94 – 95, as translated by Curd & McKirahan, p. 22).

¹⁷ ‘The magnitude of the scale [harmonia] is the fourth and the fifth. The fifth is greater than the fourth by a tone. For from the highest [string; the lowest in pitch] to the middle [string] to the third is a fourth; from the third to the highest [string] is a fifth. That which is in the midst of the middle [string] and the third is a tone. The fourth is the ratio 3:4, the fifth is 3:2, and the octave is 2:1. Thus the scale [harmonia] is five tones and two semitones, the fifth is three tones and a semitone and the fourth is two tones and a semitone.’ (Stobaeus, Selection 1.21.7d =44B6a, as translated by Curd & McKirahan, p. 23).

unlimited as the basis of a harmonia achieved through number – a harmonia which, for Philolaus, was the basis not only of music but of everything in the universe.¹⁸ While there is no direct evidence that Socrates is referring specifically to Philolaus (or to any other of the Pythagoreans), I would suggest that it is significant that:

- (i) he has chosen, as an example of harmonia in the soul, a type of harmonia (the musical scale) which contemporary readers would associate with quantification;
- (ii) he makes reference to limit and, in doing so, introduces a term which, in contemporary philosophy, applies both to the principles of musical harmony and to the 'ordering' of the universe as a whole.

In doing so, he alludes to the possibility that harmonia in the soul may be quantifiable and, therefore, something against which we can measure/quantify our own lives. Just as the art of measurement assumes a low profile at the end of the *Protagoras*, and throughout the *Gorgias*, so it continues to do so in the *Republic*. Nevertheless, it remains present in the background and, I would suggest, remains for Socrates, potentially at least, 'the salvation of our lives'.

Socrates does, in fact, provide one clear example of how harmonia in the state is measurable. He suggests that a fundamental part of the ruler's role is to ensure that they do not let the city increase to a size that will endanger the unity which is essential to its harmonia. Once a city gets too big, its citizens will no longer constitute a unified whole but will, instead, disintegrate into separate factions, which are effectively different states. To prevent this happening, Socrates suggests, the rulers must quantify correctly the size to which the city can grow without losing its unity, and ensure that it does not grow beyond this size:

'Then this would also be the best limit for our guardians to put on the size of the city. And they should mark off enough land for a city that size and let the rest go.

[Adeimantus] What limit is that?

I suppose the following one. As long as it is willing to remain one city it may continue to grow, but it cannot grow beyond that point.

[Adeimantus] That is a good limit.

¹⁸ Nature in the cosmos was fitted together out of unlimiteds and limiters; both the cosmos as a whole and everything in it' (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers* 8.85 = Philolaus 44B1, as translated by Curd & McKirahan, p. 23)

Then, we'll give our guardians this further order, namely, to guard in every way against the city's being either small or great in reputation instead of being sufficient in size and one in number.' (423b5 – c4, Grube, rev. Reeve, 1997)

Here Socrates offers a practical example of the model of justice which he has outlined at 471 – 4, namely of the process of measurement against a practical standard [paradeigma] of justice as harmonia in the state. He makes clear that putting this model into practice involves:

- expressing the standard we aspire to in quantitative terms and establishing this as a quantitative standard for our lives (423b3 – 9). In this example, the harmonia of the state (the standard it aspires to) is expressed in terms of its maximum size, which thus provides a limit to its expansion.
- referring to this quantitative standard in determining how we act (423b9 – c1). In this example, the ruler will refer to the maximum size for the state in every decision he makes about acquiring land and territory. He will allow the state to acquire territory up to its maximum size, but not beyond.
- being constantly aware of this standard in order to ensure that the state does not exceed or fall short of it (423c2 – 4).

The potential contribution of the art of measurement to achieving justice in our lives is made very clear in this example. Measurement brings clarity and objectivity to the process of comparison of our lives against a practical standard for justice.

- It brings precision and accuracy to our attempt to achieve justice in our lives. If we define the standard we live by in quantitative terms, we clarify exactly what justice entails and how close we are to achieving it. The ruler will be clear as to the precise size to which the state can grow if it is to maintain the harmonia that constitutes its justice.
- It brings objectivity to our attempt to achieve justice. Justice is expressed and evaluated in objective, quantitative terms which offer no scope for subjective opinion. When the amount of land the state can occupy has been 'marked off', and a clear limit established, there is no further scope for debate on the state's expansion but only for reference to this limit.
- As a result, measurement overcomes our vulnerability to the influence of popular opinion by providing us with a clear standard of what is actually right

for us to do. In this example, the ruler will no longer be swayed by the need to maintain the reputation of the state in the eyes of other cities. Instead, he will concentrate on maintaining the right size, regardless of how others will view this.

Socrates' discussion of the right size for a just state comes about in response to a question from Adeimantus. Socrates has emphasised (421c ff.) that extremes of poverty and wealth will damage the harmonia of a state. Adeimantus asks whether, in some cases, the state may be put at disadvantage in war through its lack of wealth. It may be particularly vulnerable, he suggests, if it is fighting against a very wealthy state or against states which have combined their resources. Socrates' reply is that wealthy men represent no match for trained fighters¹⁹ and that combined wealth is achieved at the cost of disunity which weakens a state.²⁰ Up to this point, Socrates' reply represents a direct response to Adeimantus' question, but at this stage Socrates moves from a discussion of wealth in a state (the subject of Adeimantus' question), to a discussion of the size of territory a state occupies:

'And as long as your own city is moderately governed in the way that we've just arranged, it will, even if it has only a thousand men to fight for it, be the greatest. Not in reputation; I don't mean that, but the greatest in fact. Indeed, you won't find a city as great as this one among either Greeks or barbarians, although many that are many times its size may seem to be as great.' (423a5 – b3, Grube, rev, Reeve, 1997)

Socrates goes on to explain that it is the role of the ruler to avoid the state becoming too large in size (423b4 – c4, see above), and it is clear that, at this stage, he is talking specifically about the amount of land a state possesses. If this is to make sense as a response to Adeimantus' original question about the wealth of a state, we must assume that Socrates is making a link between the size of a state's territory and the extent of its wealth. His argument is that by limiting the size of a state's territory we limit its wealth, and thus avoid the weaknesses that excessive wealth brings. Yet the link Socrates assumes between the size of a state and its wealth is just as

¹⁹ 'Well then, it would appear that our trained soldiers should easily be a match for two or three times their number.' (422c8 - 5, Lee, 1987)

²⁰ 'We'll have to find a greater title for the others because each of them is a great many cities, not a city, as they say in the game. At any rate, each of them consists of two cities at war with one another, that of the poor and that of the rich, and each of these contains a great many. If you approach them as one city, you'll be making a big mistake. But if you approach them as many and offer to give to the one city the money, power and indeed the inhabitants of the other, you'll always find many allies and few enemies.' (422e4 – 423a5, Grube, rev. Reeve, 1997)

tenuous as the link which Adeimantus proposed between the wealth of a state and its strength in war, a link which Socrates challenged vigorously (422b –d). A state may have a limited amount of land but a large amount of wealth, and so still be vulnerable to the disunity which, Socrates has suggested, is the result of excessive wealth. We need to question, therefore, not only why Socrates introduces the size of a state's territory into his response to Adeimantus' question, but also why he goes on to emphasise that controlling the size of a state's territory is a central part of the guardian's role. This doesn't really make sense as a response to Adeimantus, so Socrates is either unaware of its irrelevance or he must have another reason for emphasising this aspect of the ruler's role. I would suggest that he recognises that, by introducing a discussion of a state's territory, he gains an opportunity to illustrate how objective measure against a paradeigma which is expressed in quantitative terms provides a basis for practical aretê. By describing how the ruler should manage the size of a state's territory, Socrates offers a clear example of the art of measurement in practice, and of the contribution that this makes to achieving or maintaining harmonia. The way he describes the ruler's role makes it clear that he is describing an art of measurement - a practical activity which involves accurately quantifying a sufficient size for the state [hosên dei to megethos tèn polin poieisthai, 423b6], marking off [aphorisamenous, 423b7] the appropriate amount of land as a boundary [horos, 423b5] for the state's expansion, and referring to this boundary in every decision he makes.

By describing the role of measurement within this particular decision (which can be expressed in terms of quantity), Socrates is able to illustrate how, potentially, measurement could bring objectivity to decisions the ruler makes and thus be the basis of justice in our lives. In illustrating how we can express the right size of state in terms of a specific numerical quantity, Socrates shows how the quantification which is the basis of musical harmonia can also be the basis of harmonia in our lives. If we could quantify other aspects of a harmonia in the state and individual, then all our decisions could be determined objectively by quantification. Unfortunately, Socrates is not yet in a position to show us how other aspects of our lives are quantifiable in the same way, and so he can only allude to a model of aretê founded upon measurement.

At 426d – e, immediately after his discussion of the size of a just state, Socrates compares an unjust ruler (who has not, through the proper education, gained an understanding of what is truly just) to a man lacking in the art of measurement:

‘What do you mean? Have you no sympathy for such men? Or do you think it’s possible for someone who is ignorant of measurement not to believe it himself when many others who are similarly ignorant tell him that he is six foot tall? (426d7 – e1, Grube, rev. Reeve, 1997)

The unjust ruler is described as *like* a man who lacks a valid standard of measurement, and has, therefore, no other option than to believe the judgements of others. He is thus susceptible to their opinions and their flattery, and will use these (rather than true justice) as the basis for ruling the state. Here, Socrates is not just talking about one aspect of the ruler’s role, but about ruling justly in general. By using measurement as an analogy for justice as a whole, Socrates builds upon his description of how the ruler ‘measures’ the size of the state, and prepares the ground for giving measurement a more fundamental role in justice. At the same time, his use of this analogy underlines his awareness that in applying measurement to other aspects of justice, he is confined to using it as an analogy because he cannot demonstrate how, in practice, other aspects of justice are measurable. 426d7 – e1 contrasts sharply with *Protagoras* 356d3 – e2 (see p.12). In both passages, Socrates describes how measurement brings clarity and rules out the misleading influence of opinion,²¹ but in the *Protagoras* he is claiming that this art has a direct application to aretê, whereas in the *Republic* he avoids openly making this claim. He is aware that the account of justice he has proposed in the *Republic* - as harmonia in the soul - does not lend itself easily to quantitative measurement, and yet he is also aware that, without the art of quantitative measurement, we may be deluded into believing that our lives are just.

6.6 to ta hautou prattein?

Socrates’ reluctance to describe the ruler as openly using an art of measurement may also reflect his awareness that this would be incongruous within an account of justice which advocates each class fulfilling only their own role (to ta hautou prattein, 433b4). Socrates has already made clear that technai should be the concern of the

²¹ The ability of measurement to rule out the misleading influence of opinion is also emphasised in Socrates’ discussion of the appropriate size for a just state. Socrates contrasts [423a6 - 7] a state which is great by reputation [tô eudokimein] with one which is truly the greatest [hôs alêthôs megistê] because, by limiting its size, it has achieved true justice. The ruler who has determined the right size for a state and uses this as a measure for its expansion is no longer concerned with the state’s reputation [dokousa, 423c4] but with maintaining its appropriate [hikanê, 423c4] size.

productive class and not of the ruling class.²² To advocate now that the ruler should practise a technê would cut across this account of justice.

I would suggest that Socrates begins to address this difficulty at 473d - e when he claims, much to Glaucon's horror, that the ideal state which they have described will never come into being to the fullest extent possible [phuêi te eis to dunaton, 473e1] or see the light of the sun ['kai phôs hêliou idêi', 473e2] until philosophers rule the state:

'Unless philosophers rule as kings or those who are now called kings and leading men genuinely and adequately philosophise, that is, until political power and philosophy entirely coincide, while the many natures who at present pursue either one exclusively are forcibly prevented from doing so, cities will have no rest from evils, Glaucon, nor, I think, will the human race. And, until this happens, the constitution we've been describing in theory will never be born to the fullest extent possible or see the light of the sun.' (473c11 – e1, Grube, rev. Reeve, 1997)

In this section, I will explore the relationship between Socrates' account of justice as the ability to measure our lives against a practical standard of excellence and his claim that justice depends upon philosophical understanding. I will suggest that he uses the metaphor of sight to establish an integral relationship between these two aspects of justice. The foundation of this metaphor is laid at 472d4 - 10, where Socrates compares the practical standard of justice which they have developed to an artist's representation of an ideally beautiful man, which illustrates what an ideal man would look like if he were to exist. The artist's picture is an illustration [paradeigma] of the ideal. By analogy, Socrates suggests that they have developed an illustration in words of an ideally just state [paradeigma epoioumen logôi agathês poleôs, 472d10 – e1]. Thus he describes his account of justice not only as a practical standard but also as a visual standard – an illustration or model, which we can 'look to' for guidance in living our lives. This is reflected in the language he uses to describe the comparison of our lives against this standard. He suggests, for example, that we should look to [apoblepein, 472c7] the paradeigma of a just and unjust man in order

²² This is clear, for example, in his discussion in Book III of the primary education which is appropriate for the ruling class: 'Should they imitate metal workers or other craftsmen, or those who row in triremes, or their time-keepers, or anything else connected with ships? How could they, since they aren't to concern themselves with any of these occupations..' (396a8 – b3, Grube, rev. Reeve, 1997)

to establish who bears the closest resemblance to each of them [hos an ekeinois hoti homoiotatos êi, 472c9 – d1].

At 473d - e, Socrates suggests that this ideal state will not be 'born to the fullest extent possible' [phuêi ... eis to dunaton, 473d7] or 'see the light of the sun' [kai phôs hêliou idêi, 473d7 – e1] until the state is ruled by philosophers. Socrates is apparently using these two expressions to describe a situation where the ideal state has been achieved (or at least where we have come as close to it as we can get) in the real world; the perfect state is thus 'born' and emerges into the 'light of the sun'. Yet Socrates' concern throughout the passage (471 – 4) has been primarily to establish the *use* of an ideal in our lives. He makes clear within the passage that his whole account of justice represents an ideal for us to live by [paradeigmatos ara heneka, 472c4] and aim towards. An alternative interpretation, therefore, is that he is not talking about how a state *achieves* the ideal of justice, but about the more fundamental question of how it incorporates this ideal as a standard within its life. On this interpretation, phuêi refers to the standard's progress/growth towards becoming real/possible [eis to dunaton] as a *standard* within our lives. This progress happens only when the ideal 'sees the light of the sun' – that is, when it is illuminated by the sun for its citizens, who now understand that it represents the kind of state they should be aiming to achieve. By referring to the illumination of the standard by which the state should live, Socrates builds on his earlier description of the ideal state as an illustration to which we can refer in living our lives; this illustration is now described as becoming visible by illumination in the light of the sun. Socrates claims, however, that this will only happen when the state is ruled by philosophers and thus suggests that only philosophers are capable of recognising this ideal and of establishing it within the state. This interpretation is supported by a later passage, 484c – d, where he repeats his claim that only philosophers can recognise the standards the state should live by:

'And isn't it clear that the guardian who is to keep watch over everything should be keen-sighted rather than blind?

Of course it's clear.

So do you think then, that there's any difference between the blind and those who are really deprived of the knowledge of each thing that is? The latter have no clear model in their souls, and so they cannot – in the manner of painters – look to what is most true, make constant reference to it, and study it as exactly as possible. Hence they cannot establish here on earth conventions about what is fine or just or good,

when they need to be established, or guard and preserve them, once they have been established.

No, by god, there isn't much difference between them.

Should we, then, make these blind people our guardians or rather those who know each thing that is and who are not inferior to the others, either in experience or in any other part of virtue?' (484c – d, Grube, rev. Reeve, 1997)

In this passage it is very clear that Socrates is talking about how we establish [tithesthai, 484d1 & 2] and safeguard [sôzein, 484d2] the ideal the state should live by, rather than about how we achieve this standard. He restates his earlier claim that only philosophers can do this for the state, and suggests that the non-philosopher is 'blind' to the standards the state should live by, whereas the philosopher is 'keen-sighted'. In presenting the practical standards we live by as a visible illustration of how we should live, the passage recalls 471 – 4. In describing philosophers as keen-sighted, however, Socrates shifts the emphasis of the metaphor from the visibility of the paradeigma itself – its illumination in the light of day - to the philosopher's ability to see it. This indicates that, having begun to explore the nature of philosophical knowledge, Socrates is ready to explore how such knowledge enables the philosopher to 'see' the practical standards we should live our lives by and to make these standards visible to/in the state.

Socrates suggests that the non-philosopher is blind to what is just in the state because he does not have a standard [paradeigma] of absolute truth [to alêthestaton, 484c7] about justice. So here, as at 471 – 4, Socrates refers again to the use of a standard [paradeigma] in achieving justice in our lives - a standard which enables us to make practical decisions about what is right and wrong. It provides a basis for identifying those aspects of the state's life which are already just and, therefore, need to be preserved and those aspects which need to be changed by establishing new laws. But at 484c – d, Socrates makes clear that the practical standard against which we compare our lives must, if it is to be of any real value, reflect 'what is most true' [alêthestaton]. For this reason, it can only be 'seen' by those who, through philosophy, have grasped the true nature of reality [auto ara hekaston to on, 480a11]. In this way, Socrates provides a basis for his earlier claim (473c – e) that the ideal we must live our lives by will be invisible in a state that is not ruled by philosophers. Despite its practical application, this ideal is founded upon a standard of absolute truth which can only be understood ('seen') by philosophers. In a state where

philosophers do not have power, therefore, it will not be recognised as an ideal and so will not see the light of day.

Socrates uses the analogy of art to emphasise the integral relationship between the practical standard of excellence which we use in living our lives and the standard of absolute truth from which this is derived. At 471 – 4 he compares the practical standard of excellence which has been developed in Books II – IV to an artist's picture of an ideal individual. At 484 he compares a standard of absolute truth to the model which an artist uses when painting a picture. These two analogies remind us that both standards serve as an illustration or visual model, which we can 'look to' for guidance in living our lives, and highlight an integral relationship between them. The artist's picture of the ideal man is clearly derived from and dependent upon the model which the artist uses. The picture wouldn't be created, or certainly wouldn't be an accurate image, if the artist didn't use and pay close attention to a model. In this way, Socrates emphasises that the practical standard we live by (the standard which he established in Books II – IV) must be derived from a standard of 'what is most true'.

So, by identifying the direct relationship between the practical standard we live our lives by and a standard of absolute truth, this passage clarifies the relationship between practical justice and philosophical understanding. It reinforces the model of practical justice which Socrates proposed at 471 – 4 as the evaluation of our life against a practical ideal. At the same time, it clarifies that this practical ideal is derived from and dependent upon a standard for what is absolutely true about justice. In doing so, it makes the measurement of our lives against this standard a very different art from the one which Socrates proposed in the *Protagoras*. Socrates makes clear that, when we measure our lives against a practical ideal, we are demonstrating our understanding of a standard of absolute truth about justice – that is, an understanding of what is truly good. In contrast, when we exercise the *Protagoras*' art of measurement, we are doing no more than making accurate calculations based upon the best standard which the many can come up with. Pleasure is established as the principle by which a good life is measured purely on the basis that the many cannot cite any other way of judging whether a life is good. Socrates emphasises numerous times that they are unable to give any other account of a good life:

'Or can you point to any result by reference to which you call them good, other than pleasures and pains? They would say no, I think.'

I think so too, said Protagoras.

So you pursue pleasure as good, and avoid pain as evil?

He agreed.

So it's pain which you regard as evil, and pleasure as good since you even call enjoyment itself bad when it deprives you of greater pleasures than it has in itself, or leads to pains which are greater than its own pleasures. For if you call enjoyment itself bad for any other reason and by reference to any other result, *you would be able* to tell us what it is. *But you can't.*

I don't think so either, said Protagoras.

And again, surely it's the same about suffering pain itself. Don't you call suffering pain itself good when it gets rid of greater pains than it has in itself, or when it leads to pleasures which are greater than the pains? For if you refer to *any other* result when you call suffering pain itself good than the one I say, *you will be able* to tell us. *But you can't.*' (*Protagoras* 354c – e, Taylor 1991, my italics)

'But even now you are at liberty to withdraw *if you can give any other account* of the good than pleasure, or of evil than pain. Or are you content to say that it is a pleasant life without pains?' (354e – 355a, Taylor, 1991, my italics)

Socrates emphasises, by making the point many times, that the many cannot offer an alternative account of a good life. The language he uses stresses their *inability* to describe a good life in terms that are not ultimately reducible to pleasure or pain and their lack of *any other* account. Having firmly established this principle, Socrates constructs upon it an argument against akrasia – an argument which results in the conclusion that aretê is the art of measurement of pleasure in our lives.²³ We are aware, however, that this model of aretê is constructed upon an account of/standard for a good life which amounts only to the best the many can come up with. Socrates has actually admitted this, and drawn attention to it; at *Protagoras* 354e he explains that he has gone on at length about the hedonism of the many because 'the whole argument depends on this'. Furthermore, we have our doubts as to whether this really is the best account of a good life the many could come up with. They have Socrates and Protagoras speaking for them – both of whom have a vested interest in arguing against akrasia and in demonstrating the role of knowledge in a good life. We are left wondering whether the metrêtikê technê, despite the clarity it brings to our

²³ *Protagoras* 355a ff..

pursuit of a good life, is founded on an account of a good life which has not really been put to the test.

In the *Republic*, in contrast, Socrates makes clear that his account of practical justice is founded on a standard for a good life which is 'alêthestaton'. Whereas the *Protagoras*' art of measurement has been established by exploring and clarifying popular opinion,²⁴ the *Republic*'s art of measurement uses a standard which is established by turning away from popular opinion about a good life (and the sense experiences from which such opinions are derived).²⁵ Socrates' detailed questioning of the many in the *Protagoras* about their experiences and opinions is in sharp contrast with his claim in the *Republic* that the true philosopher will ignore such experiences and opinions.²⁶ The *Republic*'s art of measurement is strengthened because it is founded on an objective understanding of what a good life entails, achieved by setting aside the misleading influence of the sensible world.

It becomes clear that measurement of justice in our lives is fundamentally different from any other technê because it is founded upon an understanding which cannot be gained through practical experience and which can, in fact, only be acquired by ceasing to be concerned with practical experience. The art of measurement which Socrates alludes to in the *Republic* offers the accuracy and determinacy of any other technê, but is founded on philosophical understanding rather than on practical experience. Thus Socrates need no longer be concerned about making this technê the responsibility of the ruling class, since it is fundamentally different from the technai which are the concern of the productive class.

²⁴ Socrates explores what motivates the many in all their actions, and clarifies the basis upon which they describe an experience as good or bad. In doing this, however, he is not clarifying the true nature of a good life, but only the truth about the many's opinion on what a good life entails.

²⁵ From 474 – 484, Socrates has begun to explore the nature of philosophical knowledge, and has concluded that the philosopher is concerned with the 'true being of each thing' [auto ara hekaston to on, 480a11]. This entails understanding each thing (beauty, justice etc) in itself [kath'auto, 476b9 – 10] and recognising its true nature [tên phusin, 476b7]. In order to achieve this understanding, the philosopher must turn his attention away from the unstable world of sense experience, which can only be the object of opinion. At 484c – d, he makes clear that the philosopher's understanding of the truth provides him with a standard [paradeigma] of absolute truth 'to alêthestaton' against which he can correctly determine the way the state should live.

²⁶ 'And they [philosophers] set their hearts on the field of knowledge, while the other type set theirs on the field of opinion for, as you will remember, we said that their eyes and hearts were fixed on the beautiful sounds and colours and so on, and that they could not bear even the suggestion that there was such a thing as beauty itself.' (479e9 – 480a4, Lee, 1987)

6.7 Real and Unreal Pleasures

I have suggested in the rest of this chapter that, in the *Republic*, Socrates still presents aretê as the ability to achieve an ordered state of soul – an ability which entails the measurement of our lives against a model (paradeigma) of aretê. In doing so, he builds upon and reinforces the account of aretê which he gave in the *Gorgias*. He does this by clarifying what an ordered state of soul consists in (by identifying its component parts – the rational, appetitive and spirited) and by establishing a state of harmonia between these parts as a paradeigma against which we can measure our own soul/lives. In addition, he raises the status of the art of measurement by presenting this paradeigma as a representation of the truth about aretê.

The problem of human motivation

However, in presenting this model of aretê, Socrates is still faced with the question, which Callicles raised in the *Gorgias*, of why we should be motivated to pursue an ordered state of soul when this requires us to restrain the appetitive part of the soul and thus, apparently, restrict the amount of pleasure in our lives. Callicles argues that his life is happiest when he achieves as much pleasure as possible, and Socrates is unable to convince him otherwise. The strength of Callicles' argument is that it is based upon and refers to his own direct life experience of what, in practice, motivates him and makes him happy. This presents Socrates with the challenge of 'explaining away' Callicles' actual experience of what makes him happy and he faces a similar challenge in his discussion of aretê in the *Republic*. When Socrates suggests that achieving order (harmonia) in the soul is the basis of a good and happy life, he must also explain why we would not be happier spending our lives in pursuit of our own self-interests. As Russell (2005, p107) puts it '...the problem remains that a life's being 'orderly' is not necessarily the first thing that even reasonable, mature persons would cite as making the happy life happy'. Yet unless Socrates' account of aretê is underpinned by an adequate account of our motivation to achieve it in our own lives, then it will never be the 'salvation of our lives'.

From the very beginning of the *Republic*, Socrates is faced once again with the challenge of providing an adequate account of our motivation to achieve justice (aretê) in our lives. Thrasymachus claims (Book I) that justice is no more than the advantage of the stronger and that happiness is obtained by acting unjustly in one's

own best interests. At 343d, he gives three specific examples of where, in practice, acting justly can result in unhappiness for the agent:

‘You must consider it as follows, Socrates, or you will be the most naïve of all: a just man must always get less than does an unjust one. First, in their contracts with one another, when a just man is partner to an unjust, you will never find, when the partnership ends, that the just one gets more than the unjust, but less. Second, in matters relating to the city, when taxes are to be paid, a just man pays more on an equal amount of property, an unjust one less: but when the city is giving out refunds, a just man gets nothing while an unjust one makes a large profit. Finally, when each of them holds political office, a just person – even if he is not penalized in other ways – finds that his private affairs deteriorate more because he has to neglect them, that he gains no advantage from the public purse because of his justice, and that he is hated by his relatives and acquaintances because he is unwilling to do them an unjust favour.’ (343d2 – e7, Reeve, 2004)

In Book II, Glaucon and Adeimantus support Thrasymachus’ argument by suggesting that, given immunity from the social consequences of our actions, our natural motivation is to act in pursuit of our own interests because this makes us happier. They present Socrates with the challenge of showing why we should be motivated to pursue justice in itself, rather than for its consequences:

‘On the basis of what further argument, then, should we choose justice over the greatest injustice? For if we possess such injustice with a false façade, we will do as we have a mind to among gods and humans, both while we are living and when we are dead, as both the masses and the eminent claim. So given all that has been said, Socrates, what device could get someone with any power – whether of mind, wealth, body, or family – to be willing to honor justice, and not laugh aloud when he hears it praised?’ (366b4 – c3, Reeve, 2004)

In Socrates’ subsequent development in the *Republic* of his own account of a just and happy life (as dependent upon a state of harmonia in the soul and in the state) he does not appear to respond directly to the challenge which Glaucon and Adeimantus have raised. In Book IX, however, he finally responds to it through his exploration of the type of city and ruler which have the most just and happiest life. As part of this exploration, he discusses the role of pleasure within a just and happy life

through two arguments (580c – 583a, 583b – 588a) which lead to the conclusion that the philosopher's life is the happiest.

In the first argument (580c ff.), Socrates suggests that each part of the soul gains pleasure from a different source. The appetitive part of the soul gains its pleasure from money and profit, the spirited part from victory and good reputation, and the rational part from learning and truth. Our judgement of which of these pleasures is the greatest is influenced by which part of our soul is 'in charge'. However, only the philosopher (who is ruled by the rational part of the soul) is in a position to judge which type of life is the most pleasant. This is because the philosopher has experience of all three types of pleasure and, in addition, can apply the power of reasoned argument to this experience.

'So, of the three pleasures, then, the most pleasant would be that of the part of the soul with which we learn, and the one of us in whom it rules has the most pleasant life.

[Glaucón] How could it be otherwise? The knowledgeable person at least praises with authority when he praises his own life.

What life and pleasure does the judge say are in second place?

[Glaucón] Clearly, those of the warrior and honor-lover, since they are closer to his own than those of the moneymaker.

Then those of the profit-lover come last, apparently.

[Glaucón] Of course.

Well, then, that makes two in a row. And twice the just person has defeated the unjust one. (583a1 – b2, Reeve, 2004)

This conclusion, however, presents Socrates with the difficulty of arguing against Glaucón and Adeimantus' own direct life experience of what makes them happy. This is a difficulty which Socrates addresses within his second argument about the role of pleasure within a good life, from 583b. In this argument, Socrates suggests that our judgements about the pleasantness of our lives cannot be taken at face value and draws a distinction between real and unreal pleasures. He bases his argument on the premise that real pleasure is not just the avoidance or relief of pain (583c – 585a), as many people think, and makes a distinction between the pleasures that satisfy the body and those that satisfy the mind (585b). Socrates argues that, since intelligible things are more real, the pleasures they experience are, therefore, more real. While there has been much controversy about the precise nature and the validity of the

distinction which Socrates is making, I intend to concentrate on his conclusion that it is the ordered state of soul which can maximise the true pleasure we experience:

‘So, when the entire soul follows the philosophic element and does not engage in faction, the result is that each element does its own work and is just; and, in particular, each enjoys its own pleasures, the best pleasures and – to the degree possible – the truest.

[Glaucón] Absolutely.

So, when one of the other parts gains mastery, the result is that it cannot discover its own pleasure and compels the other parts to pursue an alien, and not a true pleasure. (586e4 – 587a6, Reeve, 2004)

Here Socrates refers again to the state of harmonia between the three different dunamis within the soul, which he presented as the basis of a just life in *Republic IV* (443c9 – 444a2). In this case, however, he suggests that, by acting in pursuit of an ordered state of soul, we will achieve true pleasure in our lives. Since the pleasures of the rational part of the soul are more real, the ordered soul within which reason is ‘in charge’ is in a position to maximise true pleasure. In making this claim, he responds to the challenge which Callicles presented in the *Gorgias* – to explain why we should be motivated to act against our own self-interests in order to live a just life. Socrates makes clear that, in doing so, we will maximise the real pleasure in our lives. While this will involve restricting the satisfaction of some of our desires, the fulfilment of these desires would only result in the illusion of pleasure and so would not, in the long run, make us happier.

Does Socrates also respond to Glaucon and Adeimantus’ challenge of showing why we should be motivated to pursue justice in itself, rather than for its consequences? It could be argued that, if we are motivated to pursue an ordered state of soul because it is pleasantest, we are not pursuing it for its own sake. Russell (2005, p.106) refers to the additive conception of happiness, according to which the happiness of a virtuous life depends upon ‘some dimension of that life, or other, instead of on its rational structure as a whole.’ The advantage of this conception of happiness is, as Russell points out, ‘that it does well at showing that a certain mode of living is attractive and thus a reasonable candidate for happiness.’ In other words it offers an account of our motivation for living such a life and responds to the type of challenge which Callicles raised. However, Russell also points out that ‘it does so at the cost of making happiness ‘dimensional’ rather than holistic: a happy life is so because of that

dimension of it that is its pleasantness, say.' It could be argued that the model of a good life which Socrates puts forward in Book IX depends upon such an additive conception of happiness, according to which the rational pursuit of an ordered state of soul results in a happy life because pleasure is one dimension of this life. Russell argues against this, and suggests that, in Book IX, Socrates presents the pursuit of pleasure as an important part of rational activity, rather than as 'tacked on' to wisdom.²⁷ He still accepts, however, that pleasure is a conditional good (albeit an 'especially important' one – p.137) with the order of the soul as the unconditional good upon which a good and happy life ultimately depends.

I would go further than this, and suggest that in Book IX, Socrates presents the maximisation of pleasure within our lives as *identical* with the pursuit of an ordered state of soul. From the outset of the two arguments about pleasure, Socrates demonstrates a willingness to accept that pleasantness is the basis upon which Glaucon judges the goodness/happiness of a life. Socrates' conversation with Glaucon from 580c – 583a is underpinned by the acceptance that pleasantness is the value against which they are judging the goodness/happiness of a life. This is stated explicitly by Socrates at 581e:

'Since the pleasures of each kind and the lives themselves dispute with one another - not about which life is finer or more shameful or better or worse - but about which is more pleasant and less painful, how are we to know which of them is speaking the absolute truth?' (581e5 – 582a1, Reeve, 2004)

In this statement Socrates acknowledges that within their discussion about the best/happiest life, the debate will focus upon the relative pleasantness of different types of pleasure (he expresses this in terms of the pleasures 'disputing' with one another) because the quantity of pleasure within a life is the way in which Glaucon judges its goodness. Furthermore, when at *Republic* 583a – b (quoted above) Socrates asks: 'What life and pleasure does the judge say are in second place?' he

²⁷ 'For Plato, virtue and vice are different constitutions of soul, and we can evaluate them by determining which of them is identical to a psychologically healthy, integrated, and thriving soul, and which to an unhealthy and twisted one. Pleasure is relevant to this comparison, for one thing, because the ways in which the different aspects of the soul find enjoyment in the world around them are a key factor in the health or sickness of the soul. For another, to take pleasure in one's life as a whole is to judge one's life to be genuinely rewarding and satisfying, to be a truly happy life; and that judgement can be correct or mistaken, and made from within a better or worse perspective.' (Russell, 2005, p.136)

appears to accept that the judgement about (a) how good a life is and (b) how [truly] pleasant it is, are one and the same.

Socrates' apparent willingness to accept that, for his interlocutor, the maximisation of pleasure is the basis of a good life strongly recalls his discussion of the nature of aretê within the *Protagoras*. From *Protagoras* 351b he established that the many regarded the maximisation of pleasure as the basis of a good life, and constructed his account of aretê (as the metrêtikê technê) upon this. However, as discussed in chapter 3, this required both himself and Protagoras to accept that the 'finess' of a courageous man rests in nothing more than the correct use of a technique of calculating the greatest amount of pleasure and thus to give up a great deal from their natural conception of aretê. By clarifying in *Republic* IX that real pleasure consists in the pursuit of an ordered state of soul, Socrates is able to argue once again that a good life consists in the maximisation of pleasure - without in any way challenging his conception of what the 'finess' of a just life consists in. The claim is entirely compatible with the model of aretê which he has put forward in the rest of the *Republic*, and so it is no longer jeering at him as it was in the *Protagoras*.

The direct consequence of Socrates' presenting aretê as the maximisation of (real) pleasure within our lives is that aretê depends once again, as it did in the *Protagoras*, upon the ability to judge accurately the amount of pleasure that is to be derived from our actions and to rule out misleading appearances about pleasure in order to reach the truth:

'How can it be right, then, to think that the absence of pain is pleasant or the absence of enjoyment painful?

There's no way it can be.

So, it is not right. But when the quiet state is next to what is painful, it appears pleasant; and when it is next to what is pleasant, it appears painful. And there is nothing sound in these illusions [phantasmata] as far as the truth about pleasure is concerned. On the contrary, they are a sort of sorcery.' (584a4 – 10, Reeve, 2004)

'So isn't it necessary, then, for these people to live with pleasures that are mixed with pains, mere phantoms [eidôla] and illusionist paintings [eskiagraphêmenais] of true pleasures? And aren't they so colored by their juxtaposition with one another that they appear intense, beget mad passions for themselves in the foolish, and are

fought over – as Stesichorus tells us the phantom [eidôlon] of Helen was fought over at Troy – through ignorance of the truth.’ (586b7 – c5, Reeve, 2004)

The language of illusion and deception is present throughout the discussion of pleasure in Book IX and this strongly recalls the discussion of the metrêtikê technê in the *Protagoras*.²⁸ However, there are some key difference between the *Protagoras*’ metrêtikê technê and the model of aretê which Socrates presents in the *Republic*. Firstly, pain has no relevance to the calculation of pleasure in our lives, whereas in the *Protagoras*, it was a key part of the calculation.²⁹ In *Republic IX*, Socrates makes clear that the absence of pain does not constitute pleasure³⁰ - instead, pleasure is maximised only ‘when the entire soul follows the philosophic element and does not engage in faction’. Secondly, as discussed in section 6, pleasure is measured against a paradeigma of a good/pleasant life which is a reflection of the absolute truth. For this reason, it can only be ‘seen’ and used by those who, through philosophy, have grasped the true nature of reality [auto ara hekaston to on, 480a11]. As a result, the art of measurement is now the art of the philosopher, rather than an art which can be practised by ‘the many’.

Despite its strengths, the *Protagoras*’ metrêtikê technê reduced aretê to a parody of what Socrates believed it should be. In *Republic IX*, by establishing a new account of pleasure, which is identical with the account of a good life as an ordered state of soul which he has developed in the *Gorgias* and the *Republic*, Socrates is able to reinstate the metrêtikê technê. It makes a quiet reappearance in *Republic IX*, but in an enhanced form which addresses its original weaknesses (while retaining its strengths). It still offers the maximisation of pleasure as an objective and determinate basis for judging the nature of a good life, and as an account of our motivation for pursuing such a life – but it is now underpinned by an account of pleasure which is identical with Socrates’ conviction that aretê consists in the pursuit of an ordered state of soul. In the next chapter I will discuss how, in the *Statesman*, Socrates

²⁸ ‘So if our well-being had depended on taking steps to get large quantities and avoid small ones, what should we have judged to be the thing that saves our lives? The art of measurement or the power of appearances [hê tou phainomenou dunamis]? The latter, as we saw, confuses us and makes us often change our minds about the same things and vacillate back and forth in our actions and choices of large and small things; but measurement would have made these appearances [to phantasma] powerless, and given us peace of mind by showing us the truth and letting us get a firm grasp of it and so would have changed our lives.’

²⁹ ‘But even now you are at liberty to withdraw if you can give any other account of the good than pleasure, or of evil than pain. Or are you content to say that it is a pleasant life without pains?’ (354e8 – 355a3, Taylor, 1991)

³⁰ 584a4 – 10 (quoted above).

explores in detail how the philosopher can apply this art of measurement within the state.

Sketching the 'Sôtêria Tou Biou'

Plato and the Art of Measurement

Chapter 7 – Knowledge and Due Measure in the *Statesman*

7.1 Introduction

The *Statesman* is formally presented (257a1 – 5) by Plato as a continuation of the *Sophist*. The *Statesman* continues the search which began in the *Sophist* for a definition of the sophist, the statesman and the philosopher (although the definition of the philosopher is apparently never reached). However, it is not clear whether the *Statesman* also continues the *Theaetetus*' and *Sophist*'s investigation of knowledge¹ or whether Plato has by now moved on to other areas of concern. In this chapter I will suggest that in the *Statesman* Plato is still concerned with knowledge, but takes a different approach from that taken in the *Sophist* and the *Theaetetus*. Rather than trying to define knowledge (as in the *Theaetetus*) or to defend its existence (as in the *Sophist*), the *Statesman* is concerned with providing a model of knowledge, based upon the world we live in and understand, which is sufficient for aretê. In this respect, it continues the project which, I have suggested, began in the *Protagoras* (and progressed through the *Gorgias* and *Republic*) - to sketch the 'salvation of our lives'.

In the previous chapter, I argued that, in *Republic IX*, Socrates 'reinstated' (since its original introduction in the *Protagoras*) his account of aretê as the art of measuring pleasure in our lives. I suggested, however, that the *Republic*'s art of measurement was founded upon a very specific definition of real pleasure as the pursuit of a state of order within the soul. In this chapter I will explore how, in the *Statesman*, the principle of due measure (to metrion) is presented as the basis for achieving the ordered state of soul which is the basis of aretê. Due measure is introduced as an objective and quantifiable standard of excellence, which can accommodate² the

¹ The *Theaetetus* has asked 'what is knowledge?' and in doing so raised issues about the nature and possibility of false belief. The *Sophist* builds upon this by exploring how falsehood can occur.

² By incorporating measurement of 'the right moment' [kairos].

constantly-changing context of the world in which we live. It is presented as the basis of excellence in all technai and this is demonstrated in relation to the art of dialectic and to the art of the statesman.

In clarifying how the statesman measures the order that is the basis of aretê, the *Statesman* completes the sketch of aretê as the art of measurement which Socrates began in the *Protagoras*. In chapter one I suggested that Socrates made clear that this sketch would need to make clear, firstly, whether aretê was a technê and, secondly, upon what standard of a good life it is founded. The *Statesman* makes clear that it is a technê of measurement of order in our lives – an order which is expressed in the standard of due measure. In the final section of this chapter I will discuss how, in doing so, the *Statesman* develops the *Protagoras*' original sketch of aretê – the metrêtikê technê – while retaining its essential strengths.

7.2 Introducing Due Measure

In the first part of the dialogue, the Stranger attempts to define the statesman using the method described at 262a –c:

'Let's not take off one small part on its own, leaving many large ones behind, and without reference to classes; let the part bring a class along with it. It's a really fine thing to separate off immediately what one is searching for from the rest, if one gets it right – as you thought you had the right division, just before, and hurried the argument on, seeing it leading to human beings; but in fact, my friend, it's not safe to make thin cuts; it's safer to go along cutting through the middle of things, and that way one will be more likely to encounter classes.' (262a8 – c1, Rowe 1995)

At 266e, the Stranger introduces a different, 'shorter' method which (although it is never actually defined) appears to involve moving more directly to the significant similarities and differences rather than working systematically through the divisions. Soon after this, the use of models is introduced to help identify the significant similarities and differences within this shorter approach to division. Weaving is the central model which continues throughout the second part of the dialogue, but others are also introduced, including medicine, training, helmsmanship and refining gold. Due measure is introduced at 283c, in relation to this second approach to division, as a tool to assess the relevance of the model which is being used. The Stranger

introduces it as a tool to assess whether their long description of weaving has been relevant to their enquiry:

‘First then, let’s look at excess and deficiency in general, so that we may distribute praise and censure proportionately on each occasion when things are said at greater length than necessary and when the opposite occurs in relation to such discussions.

[Younger Socrates] That’s what we must do, then.

If we talked about these very things, I think we’d be proceeding correctly.

[Younger Socrates] What things?

About length and brevity and excess and deficiency in general. I suppose the art of measurement [hê metrêtikê] relates to all these things.

[Younger Socrates] Yes.

Then let’s divide it into two parts; that’s what we need towards our present objective.

[Younger Socrates] Please tell me how we should divide it.

This way: one part will correspond to the sharing by things in greatness and smallness in relation to each other, the other to what producing things necessarily is.

[Younger Socrates] What do you mean?

Does it not seem to you that by its nature the greater has to be said to be greater than nothing other than the less, and the less in its turn less than the greater, and nothing else?

[Younger Socrates] It does.

What about this: shan’t we also say that there really is such a thing as what exceeds the class of what is in due measure [to metrion] in what we say or indeed in what we do, which is just that respect in which those of us who are bad and those who are good most differ?’ (283c3 – e6, Rowe, 1995a)

He explains that measurement against the standard of due measure is different to comparative measurement of what is greater against/in comparison to what is less:

‘If someone will admit the existence of the class of the greater in relation to nothing other than the less, it will never be in relation to what is in due measure – you agree?

[Younger Socrates] That’s so.’ (284a1 – 4, Rowe, 1995a)

The Stranger suggests that measurement against due measure is, in fact, an essential basis for all technai, including statesmanship – the object of their enquiry – and its model, weaving:

‘Well, with this account of things³ we shall destroy – shan’t we? – both the various kinds of expertise themselves and their products, and in particular we shall make the one we’re looking for now, statesmanship, disappear, and the one we said was weaving. For I imagine all such kinds of expertise guard against the more and less than what is in due measure not as something which is not but as something which is and is troublesome in relation to what they do, and it is by preserving measure in this way that they produce all good and fine things.

[Young Socrates] Of course.’ (284a5 – b1, Rowe, 1995a)

As a result, if they do not acknowledge the existence of the due measure, they will never achieve a definition of the statesman’s art:

‘Is it the case then that just as with the sophist we compelled what is not into being as well as what is, when our argument escaped us down this route, so now it is that we must compel the more and less, in their turn, to become measurable not only in relation to each other but also in relation to the coming-into-being of what is in due measure? For if this has not been agreed, it is certainly not possible for either the statesman or anyone else who possesses knowledge of subjects relating to things done to have come into being in an undisputed way.’ (284b6 – c3, Rowe 1995a)

7.3 The origin of due measure

Due measure appears to make a rather sudden appearance within the *Statesman* and quickly to become the accepted foundation for the discussion. Young Socrates seems to accept readily the Stranger’s claim that it is the foundation of all technai and is willing to let him use it both to judge the relevance of their discussion and to define the art of the statesman (as I will discuss in the next two sections of this chapter).

I would suggest, however, that the ground for introducing due measure into a discussion about aretê, has already been laid in an earlier dialogue, the *Phaedo*, in a passage (69a6 – c3) which is often regarded as criticising the *Protagoras*’ art of measurement and, in particular, its foundation upon hedonism:

³ That is, the account of measurement as the greater measured against the lesser (as described at 283e3 – 6).

'Yes, Simmias, my good friend; *since this may not be the right way to achieve virtue, [using] the exchange of pleasures for pleasures, of pains for pains, and of fear for fear, greater for lesser ones, [as if these exchanges were] like coins; it may be, rather, that this alone is the right coin, which one should use instead of all these false coins – wisdom; and the buying and selling of all things for this and with this, may be real bravery, temperance, justice, and, in short, true goodness in company with wisdom, whether pleasures and fears and all else of that sort be added or taken away; but as for their being parted from wisdom and exchanged for one another, goodness of that sort may be a kind of illusory façade, and fit for slaves indeed, and may have nothing healthy or true about it; whereas, truth to tell, temperance, justice, and bravery may in fact be a kind of purification of all such things, and wisdom itself a kind of purifying rite.*' (*Phaedo*, 69a6 – c3, Gallop, 1975 amended)

Kahn (1996, pp. 234 – 253) suggests that this passage criticises the hedonistic calculus of the *Protagoras*. He argues (p. 251) that, in the *Protagoras*, Socrates uses the hedonistic calculus because it enables him to present a model for knowledge of the good which foreshadows and lays a basis for 'the stronger, metaphysically grounded notion of phronêsis we find in the *Phaedo*'. Kahn believes that Socrates' argument in the *Protagoras* is tongue in cheek and that he is no more committed to the hedonistic calculus as the basis of wisdom than he is to 'the virtuoso misinterpretation of Simonides' poem' (p. 242). Thus, on Kahn's interpretation, *Phaedo* 69a6 – c3 represents the introduction of a more sophisticated, metaphysical model of phronêsis which is not founded on hedonism.

Others see the passage as attacking a particular type of hedonism. Gosling and Taylor (1982, pgs. 87 – 95) suggest that if *Phaedo* 69a6 – c3 is read in the context of the discussion of which it forms part - namely Socrates' distinction between the philosopher and the lover of the body - the passage does not represent an attack on the *Protagoras*' hedonistic calculus per se or on hedonism as a whole. Instead, it challenges those who regard bodily pleasures as relevant items of value. Some pleasures, however, are valuable. So, hedonism remains intact and so, implicitly, does the hedonistic calculus which the *Protagoras* presents.

In fact, I would suggest that 69a - c is not an attack on hedonism in any form. In this passage Socrates treats pleasures, pains and fears as facts of life; they have to be dealt with and choices made about them. The passage does not seem to provide evidence either way as to whether pleasure should be identified with aretê. I would

argue that, instead, it represents a criticism of those who exchange *greater and lesser quantities* of pleasure (and pain and fear) as the basis for achieving aretê.⁴ At the start of the passage, the final object of exchange to which Socrates refers - greater for lesser (69a8 -9) - clearly applies to the three objects previously mentioned (pleasure, pain and fear) and its position at the end of the list of objects suggests that it is the exchange of greater and lesser quantities which Socrates is really criticising. The exchange of greater and lesser quantities is being wrongly used like a coin, to achieve (buy) aretê.⁵

⁴ I interpret the whole passage as being about how, in practical terms, we achieve aretê, and would suggest that this is made clear by Socrates' initial claim that the philosômatos does not make 'hê orthê pros aretên allagê' (69a6 – 7). Several commentators suggest that Socrates is describing aretê as part of an exchange, i.e. as something which is received in exchange for something else. This includes Hackforth (1955) who translates 'pros aretên' as 'the right way to exchange things for virtue' and Luce (1944) who renders it 'the right way to purchase virtue'. Yet these translations refer to the analogy of trading with coins (an analogy which has not been developed at this stage) and, therefore, seem rather premature. Burnet (1911) suggests that Socrates sees aretê as the standard against which any exchange should be judged, and thus translates 'pros aretên' as 'judged by the standard of goodness'. Archer-Hind (1973) translates it more vaguely as 'in respect to virtue'. These translations, however, fail to reflect the discussion which immediately precedes 69a6 – c3. In this discussion Socrates has described the false aretê of the majority, which consists in enduring lesser evils to avoid greater ones (68d) and giving up lesser pleasures for the sake of greater ones (68e). This is an exchange (of pleasures for pleasures and pains for pains) – an exchange which the majority of people believe achieves aretê. It, therefore, seems likely that, when Socrates says at 69a6 – 7 that it is 'not the right exchange', his point is that it is not the right way of *achieving* aretê. The translation of 69a6 – 7 as 'this is not the right exchange with a view to [achieving] aretê' would make this clearer and would establish that the passage is concerned with the practical question of how we achieve aretê and with offering a positive account of how it can be achieved. This translation not only makes a clear link with the preceding discussion, but also reflects that the discussion is now moving forward from a criticism of the life of the philosômatos into a practical and positive account of what he must do to put this right.

⁵ On my interpretation, Socrates is suggesting that the exchange of greater and lesser quantities (of pleasures, pains and fears) - rather than the quantities themselves - is being used like a coin to 'buy' a good life. Most commentators, however, assume that hôsper nomismata applies to the pleasures, pains and fears themselves. If we accept this interpretation, the implication is that quantities of pleasure etc. are exchanged for each other like coins are exchanged for each other. Since coins are not usually exchanged for one another, this presents a difficulty which commentators have addressed in several ways. Rowe (1993, p.149), for example, suggests that Socrates actually means that pleasures etc. are exchanged for each other like coins are exchanged for goods. Hackforth (1955, p.192) suggests that hôsper nomismata must be taken to refer not to the actual exchange of coins, but to the fact that we value some coins more highly than others, just as we value some pleasures more highly than others. On my interpretation, however, the analogy of coinage can be taken at face value; we no longer have to find a way round the problems of coins being exchanged for each other like pleasures, because Socrates is not suggesting that coins are like quantities of pleasure etc.. It is the various exchanges of the philosômatos which are used like coins to try and buy a better life. Although allagê (69a7) is singular, and nomismata (69a9) is plural, Socrates does give three examples of the philosômatos' exchange (pleasures for pleasures, pains for pains and fears for fears). So, we can take nomismata as applying to all three exchanges.

Later in the passage, Socrates confirms that the exchange of greater and lesser quantities has no relevance to achieving a good life:

‘...and the buying and selling of all things for this and with this [i.e. phronêsis], may be real bravery, temperance, justice, and, in short, true goodness in company with wisdom, whether pleasures and fears and all else of that sort be added or taken away; (69b1 - 5, Gallop, 1975, amended)

This part of the passage could be taken as meaning that all pleasures and fears are ultimately irrelevant to aretê.⁶ Alternatively, it can be taken as reinforcing Socrates’ claim that greater and lesser quantities (of pleasure, pain, fear etc.) have no relevance to virtue (while leaving open the possibility that pleasure, pain and fear in themselves may still have relevance). On this interpretation, the ‘adding’ and ‘taking away’ of pleasures etc. describes the *result* of the exchange of greater and lesser quantities of pleasure etc. which Socrates discussed earlier in the passage.

My interpretation of 69a –c as a criticism of the exchange of greater and lesser quantities of pleasure, pain and fear as the basis for achieving aretê is supported by the fact that this is also the object of Socrates’ criticism in the dialogue leading up to this passage. The mistake of the philosômatos in regarding the quantity of physical emotions as significant in his choices and actions is described by Socrates from 68d - 69a. The philosômatos only achieves an image of virtue because he is temperate only for the sake of greater pleasure in the longer term and courageous only to avoid greater evil in the longer-term. In criticising this exchange of greater and lesser quantities as the basis for achieving aretê, the *Phaedo* foreshadows the *Statesman*, which suggests that this cannot be the basis of excellence in any technê.⁷

⁶ Gosling and Taylor (1982, pgs. 92 – 3) interpret it more specifically as a statement that the presence or absence of bodily pleasures is irrelevant to virtue, whereas intellectual pleasures do have value in this respect.

⁷ ‘Well, with this account of things [see footnote 3 above] we shall destroy – shan’t we? – both the various kinds of expertise themselves and their products, and in particular we shall make the one we’re looking for now, statesmanship, disappear, and the one we said was weaving. For I imagine all such kinds of expertise guard against the more and less than what is in due measure not as something which is not but as something which is and is troublesome in relation to what they do, and it is by preserving measure in this way that they produce all good and fine things.

[Young Socrates] Of course.’ (*Statesman* 284a5 – b1, Rowe, 1995a)

However, at 69a – c, Socrates not only highlights the wrong way of achieving aretê but also makes the positive proposal that phronêsis is the 'right coin' with which to purchase aretê:

'it may be, rather, that this alone is the right coin, which one should use instead of all these false coins – wisdom [phronêsis];' (69a9 – 10, Gallop, 1975, amended)

All other coins (the other things we use in trying to achieve a good life) can be 'exchanged' for this one,⁸ because only by using phronêsis will we be successful in this. The phrase panta tauta (69a10), therefore, refers to the worthless coins⁹ (those exchanges of greater and lesser pleasures, pains and fears),¹⁰ used by the philosômatos, which, Socrates suggests, should all be 'exchanged' for phronêsis (i.e. phronêsis should be used instead of them). Panta tauta is, therefore, 'all these [false] coins' rather than 'all these things' (with the neuter plural case of panta tauta (69a10) applying to the false nomismata [69a9 – 10]). Phronêsis is the 'coin' which we must use to achieve a good life and its role in achieving aretê is explored through an analogy with trading:¹¹

'and the buying and selling of all things [panta] for this [toutou], or rather with this [meta toutou],' (69a – b2, Gallop, 1975, amended)

⁸ 'katallattesthai' [69a10] appears to present the difficulty that coins are not usually exchanged for one another. I would suggest, however, that since Socrates is discussing which coin is the right one to use, we can interpret his exhortation to exchange all coins for phronêsis, as an exhortation to use phronêsis instead of other coins, in order to achieve a good life. By 'exchange for' he, therefore, means 'use instead of' rather than 'swap for' or 'trade for'. This avoids the need to explain why one coin should be swapped/traded for another, since Socrates does not suggest that it should be. My interpretation does entail that katallattesthai is used in a different sense here than at 69a8, where it does refer to the exchange (i.e. swapping/trading) of pleasures etc. for each other. There is no reason, however, why the word must be used in the same sense both times, when it refers to different subjects (namely to pleasures, pains and fears at 69a8 and to coins - 'all these [false] coins' - at 69a10).

⁹ Grammatically 'panta tauta' could equally well apply collectively to 'hêdonas', 'lupas' and 'phobon' (69a7 – 8) as most commentators have suggested it does. So, for example, Gallop (1975) translates it 'all these things' (with things being the pleasures, pains and fears which the philosômatos exchanges), as does Hackforth (1955) and Weiss (1987). I have argued, however, that pleasures, pains and fears are not themselves described as coins within the analogy which Socrates draws (see note 43) and so there is no reason why he should advocate using a different coin (phronêsis) instead of them.

¹⁰ The exchanges, rather than the pleasures, pains and fears themselves, are the false coins.

¹¹ A number of commentators fail to distinguish between the simile of coinage at 69a6 – 9 and the subsequent metaphor of trading (buying and selling) into which it develops. The two are taken together and described, for example, as an 'economic metaphor' (Gooch, 1974). This fails to bring out the distinction between the identification of phronêsis as the right currency (through the simile of coinage) and the practical use of this currency in living our lives (through the analogy of trading with coins).

Here, Socrates explains how phronêsis must be used. Firstly, we must sell everything for this coin [toutou].¹² Secondly, we must buy everything¹³ with this coin [meta toutou]. Most commentators avoid translating 69a10 – b2 so that it refers directly to selling for and buying with phronêsis, because of the implication that our stock of phronêsis will increase or diminish as a result.¹⁴ However, if Socrates still has in mind (as I believe he does)¹⁵ that phronêsis is a technê (of measurement), then this will not be the case - a technê is something which, once we have acquired it, we can use as much as we want without diminishing it. Buying and selling with phronêsis will (cashing out the analogy) entail using this technê as the practical tool for making decisions and choices in our lives (about pleasures, pains, fears etc) rather than simply exchanging these for each other on the basis of quantity¹⁶ - just as we would use a coin as the practical tool for making purchases and sales. It is, thus, the use of coinage as a practical tool in living our lives (rather than as the basis of a stock of wealth which we can increase or diminish) which is the focus in this analogy. The difficulty of how the analogy of trading with coins can apply to phronêsis is overcome if we consider what Socrates may envisage that phronêsis will turn out to be and how we will use it in achieving a good life. Without phronêsis, he suggests, we will be subject to deception in our attempts to achieve a good life:

¹² Taking 'toutou' as genitive of value.

¹³ I interpret 'panta' (69b1) as referring to all the choices that are open to us during our life and including, therefore, the pleasures, pains and fears to which Socrates has referred at 69a7 – 8. There is nothing in the structure of the sentence to suggest that it refers to the aretai which Socrates lists at 69b2 - 3 (as, for example, Archer-Hind [1894, p.25] and Dorter [1982, p.29] claim it does). Nor do I accept Bluck's argument that panta refers back to panta tauta at 69a10. I have suggested that panta tauta are the false coins that the philosômatos uses and there is thus no reason why these should be bought with or sold for phronêsis.

¹⁴ 'toutou men panta kai meta toutou ônoumena te kai pipraskomena' (69b1 – 2)

The majority of translations of 'toutou' attempt to avoid the difficulty of having to explain how we can sell 'for wisdom' without affecting our stock of wisdom. Rowe (1993, p.151) does translate it as '[and everything bought and sold] for this' but suggests that Socrates subsequently corrects this by his translation of 'kai meta toutou' as 'or rather in the company of this'. Luce (1943/44, pp.61 - 2) believes Socrates is suggesting not that we sell for phronêsis, but that we exchange our false currencies for phronêsis (with toutou referring to our exchange for the correct currency). Yet this requires the interpolation of allattommena after toutou for which there appears no clear evidence.

Similarly, the majority of translations of 'meta toutou' reflect a concern on the part of commentators that, if it is translated as referring directly to buying with phronêsis, this creates the difficulty of explaining how we can 'spend' wisdom without it diminishing. So, for example, Rowe (1993, p.151) translates it instead as 'in the company of this [phronêsis]'. Gooch (1974, p.158) renders it 'with wisdom's help'. Weiss (1987, p.59) does translate it as 'with phronêsis' but qualifies her translation by adding [as one's value, aim, or concern].

¹⁵ A belief which (as I have argued in previous chapters) is supported by the re-emergence of a model of aretê as a technê of measurement in the *Republic* and *Statesman*.

¹⁶ I would suggest that this is the point that Socrates makes at 69b5 – 7.

‘but as for their being parted from wisdom and exchanged for one another, goodness of that sort may be a kind of illusory façade [skiagraphia], and fit for slaves indeed, and may have nothing healthy or true about it;...’ (69b5 – 8, Gallop, 1975, amended)

The language of illusion and deception here reflects the discussion of pleasure in *Republic* Book IX¹⁷ which, in turn, strongly recalls the discussion of the metrêtikê technê in the *Protagoras*.¹⁸

In its concern with identifying the wisdom which forms the basis of aretê (and ruling out the misleading power of appearances) *Phaedo* 69a – c continues the project which Socrates began in the *Protagoras*. At the end of the passage, Socrates returns to his description of a good life as a life devoted to purification of the soul – a description which he introduced earlier in the *Phaedo* in his comparison of the philosopher and the philosômatos:

‘whereas, truth to tell, temperance, justice, and bravery may in fact be a kind of purification of all such things, and wisdom itself a kind of purifying rite.’ (69b8 – c3, Gallop, 1975)

The use of phronêsis has emerged as the practical means (the purifying rite) through which he can achieve this. Phronêsis enables us to make objective choices, free from the concern with maximising pleasure and minimising pain. As a result, phronêsis is now described as a purifying rite (i.e. as the means by which we can purify the soul) and aretê as the act of purification. So, in returning to the theme of purity, Socrates introduces a distinction between aretê as the act of purification [katharsis]¹⁹ and phronêsis as the rite [katharmos]²⁰ through which this act is

¹⁷ ‘So isn’t it necessary, then, for these people to live with pleasures that are mixed with pains, mere phantoms [eidôla] and illusionist paintings [eskiagraphêménais] of true pleasures? And aren’t they so colored by their juxtaposition with one another that they appear intense, beget mad passions for themselves in the foolish, and are fought over – as Stesichorus tells us the phantom [eidôlon] of Helen was fought over at Troy – through ignorance of the truth.’ (586b7 – c5, Reeve, 2004)

¹⁸ ‘So if our well-being had depended on taking steps to get large quantities and avoid small ones, what should we have judged to be thing that saves our lives? The art of measurement or the power of appearances [hê tou phainomenou dunamis]? The latter, as we saw, confuses us and makes us often change our minds about the same things and vacillate back and forth in our actions and choices of large and small things; but measurement would have made these appearances [to phantasma] powerless, and given us peace of mind by showing us the truth and letting us get a firm grasp of it and so would have changed our lives.’

¹⁹ Luce (1943/44, p.63) translates katharsis as ‘consummated purification’ - that is, as the end result of the purificatory rite. He cites the scholium of Olympiodorus on this passage (where katharsis is predicated of completed aretê) as evidence for his translation. While I accept Luce’s distinction between katharsis as the end and katharmos

accomplished. In introducing this distinction, Socrates summarises the achievement of 69a6 – c3 – namely to identify the use of phronêsis as the practical means by which we can purify the soul. In the *Statesman*, it will emerge that using phronêsis involves referring to due measure in all the decisions we make in life. The *Phaedo* lays the foundation for this by making clear that the wisdom which forms the basis of aretê cannot be founded upon the measurement of greater and lesser quantities and, thus (by implication), that if a good life is to be measurable in the way that the *Protagoras* has suggested, a different type of measurement will be required.

7.4 Key Features of Due Measure

At *Statesman* 284e, the Stranger explains in more detail what he means by due measure and how it is distinguished from measurement as we normally envisage it:

‘It’s clear we would divide the art of measurement, cutting it in two in just the way we said, positing as one part of it all those kinds of expertise that measure the number, lengths, depths, breadths and speeds of things in relation to the opposite, and as the other, all those that measure in relation to what is in due measure, what is fitting, the right moment, what is as it ought to be – everything that removes itself from the extremes to the middle.’ (284e2 – 8, Rowe, 1995a)

From this we are able to identify four key features of measurement against due measure:

- (i) Measurement against due measure entails evaluation against a standard

The stranger makes a distinction between

- comparative measurement of one quantity against another;
- measurement against a standard (due measure) of what is appropriate.

In this way, he makes clear that measurement in relation to due measure involves an evaluative judgement about what is appropriate. This is in contrast to measurement

as the means of purification, I would suggest that katharsis can be translated simply as ‘act of purification’. Socrates’ point is that if we are to devote our life to the activity of purification (katharsis) of our soul, then we must use the right means of conducting this activity. If we do not use the right katharmos then we will not accomplish the act of purification.

²⁰ Burnet (1911, p.69) explains that katharmos is a specifically religious term for the initiatory ceremony of purification. I translate it ‘purifying rite’.

which merely establishes the factual size/quantity of something as a basis for comparing it against something else. The first example which Socrates gives of this evaluative judgement is in relation to their own enquiry into the art of the statesman:

'Well, I say that you and I must be careful to remember what we have now said and distribute censure and praise of both shortness and length, whatever subjects we happen to be talking about on each occasion, judging lengths not in relation to each other but, in accordance with the part of the art of measurement we previously said we must remember, in relation to what is fitting.' (286c5 – d2, Rowe, 1995)

In this particular example the Stranger suggests that their evaluative judgement about the appropriate length for their discussion will be made on the basis of what will best achieve an improvement in their skills as dialecticians (286d4 – 287a6, Rowe, 1995).

(ii) Measurement against due measure entails quantitative measurement

Many commentators interpret due measure as a non-quantitative form of measurement. For example, Rosen (1995) talks about arithmetical and non-arithmetical measurement. Lafrance (1995) makes a distinction between quantitative and qualitative measurement. Skemp (1952) suggests that, through due measure, Plato 'clears himself of adherence to mere mathematical measurement'. Lane (1998, p.127) sees the introduction of due measure as 'a considerable polemic' against the measurement of number which 'is distanced from its close customary links with order and understanding, portrayed instead as a purely comparative task'.

However, as discussed above, the distinction made at 284e2 – 8 is not between quantitative and non-quantitative measurement, but between comparative measurement and measurement against a standard. In the text, the grammatical object of both these forms of measurement is: 'the number, lengths, depths, breadths and speeds of things.' Both are still concerned with mathematical measurement of features which can be expressed in mathematical terms, but the dialogue suggests that they can be measured relatively or against a specific standard. So, we can say that the dialogue is longer or shorter (than another dialogue) or that it is the right length. In either case, there will still be a quantitative and mathematical judgement involved. Due measure still requires quantitative measurement. The Stranger makes

clear that this is the case for dialectic where due measure is primarily concerned with measuring the appropriate length of their discussion:

‘About length and brevity and excess and deficiency in general. I suppose the art of measurement [hê metrikê] relates to all these things.

[Younger Socrates] Yes.

Then let’s divide it into two parts; that’s what we need towards our present objective.’
(283c11 – d5, Rowe, 1995a)

Here again, the Stranger indicates that both parts of measurement are concerned with measuring length and brevity. Furthermore, the language used to evaluate the progress of their search for the statesman reflects the quantitative basis of due measure. For example, at 274e5, the Younger Socrates asks ‘how great’ [poson] their mistake has been and the Stranger replies that in one sense it was ‘lesser’ [brachuteron] but in another sense much ‘greater’ [pollôi meizon] and ‘more extensive’ [pleon]. At 277, when the Stranger is analysing the errors they have made so far, he suggests they have used ‘large-scale illustrations’ [megala paradeigmata, 277b3 – 4], a ‘mass’ [ogkon, 277b4] of material’ and a ‘greater part’ [meizon meros, 277b5] of the myth than was necessary. Like sculptors, they have gone wrong ‘by making additions and increasing the size of the various parts of their work beyond what is necessary’ (277a7 – b1, Rowe, 1995a). The language used reflects quantitative standards as well as evaluative judgement.

While it could be argued that the Stranger is using the language of quantity metaphorically (rather than genuinely intending that these features should be expressed in numerical terms), the grammatical structure of 284c2 – 8 counts against this, as does the fact that, in applying due measure to dialectic, it is still the *length* of their conversation that the Stranger is concerned with measuring.

(iii) Due measure is an independent²¹ and objective standard of goodness

Rosen (1995) suggests that a key feature of due measure is that it is dependent upon human intentionality. He argues that ‘in non-arithmetical measurement, everything measured is excessive, deficient or suitable with respect to a human purpose. Nothing is excessive, deficient or suitable in itself’ (p.121). This could mean

²¹ Independent of human intention.

that due measure is simply what is required or appropriate to achieve our purpose - the purpose itself may be good or bad. So, when the Stranger remarks at 283e5 – 6 that due measure is 'just that respect in which those of us who are bad and those who are good most differ,' he may, on Rosen's interpretation, mean good only in the sense of 'able to achieve our purpose'. According to Rosen, due measure is a subjective form of measurement based upon what we want to achieve.

When, however, at 284a, the Stranger clarifies the role of due measure in technê, his explanation seems to be at odds with Rosen's interpretation:

'For I imagine all such kinds of expertise guard against [paraphulattein] the more and less than what is in due measure not as something which is not but as something which is and is troublesome [chalepon] in relation to what they do, and it is by preserving measure in this way that they produce all good [agatha] and fine [kala] things.' (284a8 – b1, Rowe, 1995a)

The Stranger presents due measure as an objective standard of goodness – to which we must refer in undertaking any technê. The language he uses makes clear that due measure is not an integral part of our own intentions, but a challenging external standard which we must 'guard against' and which is 'troublesome' for us to achieve. He describes something which is external to us and which we must take account of in our actions. Furthermore, he suggests that the product resulting from a technê which has made reference to due measure is not only good but fine [kalon]. It is unlikely that the Stranger would use kalon to describe something which does no more than reflect/achieve the craftsman's purpose – instead it describes something which has achieved an objective standard of goodness/praiseworthiness. The Stranger illustrates how this standard is applied in the case of the technê which is their immediate concern – dialectic:

'Well, I say that you and I must be careful to remember what we have now said and distribute censure and praise of both shortness and length, whatever subjects we happen to be talking about on each occasion, judging lengths not in relation to each other but in accordance with [kata] the part of the art of measurement we previously said we must remember, in relation to what is fitting [pros to prepon].' (286c5 – d2, Rowe, 1995a)

Due measure is established as the objective standard of goodness which is the basis for each technê achieving what, in its own sphere, is good and fine. The Stranger also hints that this standard of goodness has a wider significance in relation to an absolute standard of truth: 'That at some time we shall need what has now been said toward the demonstration in relation to the precise truth [auto takribes] itself.' (284d1-2, Rowe, 1995a).²² Even without this significance, however, due measure has provided an objective standard (a standard which the Stranger summarises as 'everything that removes itself from the extremes to the middle') for excellence in technê.

(iv) Due measure incorporates measurement of kairos

At 284e2-8, the Stranger describes due measure as measurement of 'what is fitting, the right moment [kairos], what is as it ought to be – everything that removes itself from the extremes to the middle.'

He makes clear that measurement of kairos (the right moment) forms part of due measure. Wilson (1980) argues that kairos is 'part of a litany of traditional value words which lend emotional support' to the Stranger's introduction due measure (by this he appears to mean that it is part and parcel of due measure and adds nothing to its meaning) in the *Statesman* and is thus 'at least by association, elevated to a principle of great importance' (p.200). In support of his argument, Wilson discusses the meaning of kairos in Greek literature, and argues that, in classical literature, it is generally used in the sense of due measure, or the mean, whereas in later literature it is used in a temporal context to mean the right time.

Lane (1998), however, suggests that the something can only be appropriate or in due measure relative to its time or context [kairos]. This is precisely the point which the Stranger raises at 294, with regard to laws:

'That law could never accurately embrace what is best and most just for all at the same time, and so prescribe what is best; for the dissimilarities between human beings and their actions, and the fact that practically nothing in human affairs ever remains stable, prevent any kind of expertise whatsoever from making any simple

²² Rowe (1995a, p.208) points out that the precise truth itself could simply refer to the precise account of the statesman but acknowledges that 'At the same time, we should not miss the unmistakeable signals E.S. has given us about the importance, in a wider context, about the notion of measure...'

decision in any sphere that covers all cases and will last for all time.' (294a10 – b6, Rowe, 1995a)

At 305, the Stranger gives an example of how the statesman applies his knowledge of kairos:

'If then one looks at all the kinds of expert knowledge that have been discussed, it must be observed that none of them has been declared to be statesmanship. For what is really kingship must not itself perform practical tasks, but control those with the capacity to perform them, because it knows when it is the right time [egkairias] to begin and set in motion the most important things in cities and when it is the wrong time [akairias]; and the others must do what has been prescribed for them.' (305c9 – d4, Rowe, 1995a)

By making kairos part of due measure, Plato ensures that (unlike written laws) due measure is a standard which has practical value within the changing context of the world in which we live. While kairos is an integral part of due measure, it plays (as Lane argues) a particular role within it, and its meaning cannot (as Wilson suggests) be subsumed into the overall definition of due measure as 'everything that removes itself from the extremes to the middle.'

7.5 Due Measure and Dialectic

Due Measure is first introduced within the *Statesman* at 283c ff. as a principle for judging whether what has been said so far is of an appropriate length in relation to their enquiry (in response to the Young Socrates' claim that their definition of weaving has been too lengthy). Santa Cruz (1995, p.192) argues that due measure is presented *primarily* as the basis of dialectic, and that the dialogue's principal aim is to illustrate due measure in dialectic - the subject of enquiry, statesmanship, is secondary to the enquiry itself. She suggests that the dialogue as a whole is an illustration of due measure through dichotomy, myth and paradigm. Her view is supported by the Stranger's claim at 285d:

'What then about our inquiry now about the statesman? Has it been set before us more for the sake of that very thing, or for the sake of our becoming more able dialecticians in relation to all subjects?

[Young Socrates] That's clear too – for the sake of our being more able in relation to all.' (285d4 – 8, Rowe, 1995a).

If we take this at face value, the whole process of finding the statesman is primarily an exercise in due measure in dialectic. However, Lane (1998) argues against this and concludes (p.202) that, in the *Statesman*, 'method and politics become one'. She claims that Plato presents due measure as the basis both for doing philosophy and for political decision-making. In the next section, I will explore how Plato applies due measure to the art of the statesman and will argue in support of Lane's view. In the meantime, it is worth pointing out that Lane's argument is supported by drawing a parallel with the *Protagoras* where a discussion which is apparently concerned with dialectical method has a significant relevance to the dialogue's final conclusion about aretê.²³ A standard of measurement is presented as a dialectical tool to help move the discussion forward (by resolving a disagreement about how long Protagoras' answers should be). However, it emerges that a standard of measurement is also the basis of aretê so here too, measurement is the basis for doing philosophy and for living our lives.

In the *Protagoras*, the type of measurement which is proposed as the basis of dialectic is rather different from that which is proposed as the basis of aretê. Dialectic is about finding a middle length in their discussions, whereas aretê is about maximisation of pleasure. However, in the *Statesman*, this middle length becomes the basis for living our lives too. To this extent, the 'digression' in the *Protagoras* looks forward and gives us of a preview of the sketch of aretê which will finally emerge in the *Statesman*.

7.6 Due Measure and the Art of the Statesman

Later in the dialogue, due measure is taken out of its dialectical context into the realm of politics and the statesman. Although the specific term 'to metrion' is not mentioned directly in relation to the statesman, it becomes evident that it is also the basis of statesmanship - the statesman, like the dialectician, needs to judge 'what is fitting, the right moment, what is as it ought to be' and 'everything that removes itself from the extremes to the middle' (284e6 - 8).

²³ As discussed in Chapter 1

The Stranger explains that one aspect of the statesman's role involves controlling all other technai, by determining when it is appropriate for each craft to be practised (and when not):²⁴

'For what is really kingship must not itself perform practical tasks, but control those with the capacity to perform them, because it knows when it is the right time [egkairias] to begin and set in motion the most important things in cities and when it is the wrong time [akairias]; and the others must do what has been presented for them.' (305d1 – 4, Rowe, 1995a)

However, not only does the statesman 'weave together' the different technai within the state,²⁵ but he also 'weaves together' different types of people – the courageous and the moderate - into an integrated and ordered whole:²⁶

'For this is the single and complete task of kingly weaving-together, never to allow moderate dispositions to stand away from the courageous, but why working them closely into each other as if with a shuttle, though sharing of opinions, through honours, dishonour, esteem, and the giving of pledges to one another, drawing together a smooth and 'fine-woven' fabric out of them, as the expression is, always to entrust offices in cities to these in common.' (310e7 – 311a2, Rowe, 1995a)

In order to do this successfully, he must ensure that the state admits as citizens only those with the right disposition to be 'mixed' by the statesman.²⁷ This entails:

- making sure that anyone involved in education within the state works towards developing a disposition in their pupils which is fitting [prepon, 308e7] to contribute to the 'fine-woven' fabric which will be the final outcome;
- those who are unable to develop such a disposition because they are inherently evil are removed from the state;

²⁴ Thus applying his knowledge of kairos, which is an integral part of due measure.

²⁵ In the sense of co-ordinating when each of them is practised.

²⁶ Thus the Stranger demonstrates the statesman's concern with 'everything that removes itself from the extremes to the middle'. Courage and moderation are both presented as extremes of character, with the statesman creating a balance between them in the state.

²⁷ Here the Stranger demonstrates the statesman's concern with what is 'fitting' [prepon] in relation to the state.

- those who are unable to develop such a disposition because they are ignorant or base [tapeinotês] are subjected to slavery:

‘In just this very way, it seems to me that the art of kingship, since it is this that itself possesses the capacity belonging to the directing art, will not permit the educators and tutors, who function according to law, to do anything in the exercise of their role the working out of which will not result in some disposition which is fitting [prepon] in relation to the mixing that belongs to the directing art, and calls on them to teach these things alone; and those that are unable to share in a disposition that is courageous and moderate, and the other things that belong to the sphere of virtue, but are thrust forcibly away by an evil nature into godlessness, excess and injustice, it throws out by killing them, sending them into exile, and punishing them with the most extreme forms of dishonour.

[Young Socrates] At least it is put something like this.

And again those who wallow in great ignorance and baseness it brings under the yoke of the class of slaves.’ (308e4 – 309a6, Rowe, 1995a)

At 311, the Stranger describes the final product of the statesman’s art:

‘Then let us say that this marks the completion of the fabric which is the product of the art of statesmanship, the weaving together, with regular intertwining, of the disposition of brave and moderate people, when the expertise belonging to the king, bringing their life together in agreement and friendship and making it common between them, completing the most magnificent and best of all fabrics and covering all the other inhabitants of cities, both slave and free, holds them together with this twining and, so far as it belongs to a city to be happy, not falling short of this in any respect, rules and directs.’ (311b7 – c6, Rowe, 1995a)

Due measure which, earlier in the dialogue, has been established as the basis of dialectic, turns out to be the basis of statesmanship too – and the Stranger illustrates in detail how the statesman applies due measure to create excellence in the state. To this extent, as Lane argued, dialectic and statesmanship have become one.

However, there may be another, more fundamental, way in which the two are the same art. In chapter six, I suggested that, in *Republic* Book VI (484c –d), Socrates uses an analogy with art and the metaphor of sight to explain the integral relationship which he envisages between practical and philosophical wisdom. He suggests that the practical standard of aretê (justice) against which we measure our lives must, if it

is to enable us to live a better life, also be a standard of absolute truth [to alêthestaton, 484c7]. It can, therefore, only be understood by those who, through philosophy, have gained an understanding of the true nature of justice. He thus emphasises the dependence of the practical standard of justice by which we live our lives upon philosophical understanding of what is truly just. If, in the *Statesman*, Plato is presenting due measure – the practical standard by which the statesman achieves aretê in the state - as a reflection of the absolute truth,²⁸ then the art of statesmanship can only be practised by those who have grasped the absolute truth through philosophy. If this is the case, then dialectic (the art of the philosopher) will be an integral part of the art of the statesman. This would also make more sense of the Stranger's claim at 285d that their enquiry into the art of the statesman is 'for the sake of our becoming more able dialecticians in relation to all subjects' – in discovering the art of the statesman we will also discover the art of pursuing the truth on all subjects.²⁹

²⁸ As the stranger hints at 284d1 -2.

²⁹ Furthermore, to this extent, the *Statesman* does achieve a definition of both the statesman and the philosopher.

Sketching the 'Sôtêria Tou Biou'

Plato and the Art of Measurement

Conclusion – Completing the Sketch

I suggested in chapter six that, in the *Republic*, Socrates reintroduces an account of aretê as the measurement of pleasure in our lives - with pleasure consisting of the pursuit of an ordered state of soul. In doing so, Socrates reinforces and builds upon the claim he made in the *Gorgias* - that aretê is the ability to achieve an ordered state of soul. He also reinstates the *Protagoras*' metrêtikê technê, but in an enhanced form which takes account of its original weaknesses (while retaining its strengths). It still offers the maximisation of pleasure as an objective and determinate basis for judging the nature of a good life, and as an account of our motivation for pursuing such a life – but it is now underpinned by an account of pleasure which is line with Socrates' argument in the *Gorgias* and *Republic* that a good and kalon life consists in the pursuit of an ordered state of soul.

However, the *Republic* leaves unanswered the question of how, in practical terms, we actually measure an ordered state of soul. As I discussed in chapter seven, the *Statesman* addresses this by exploring how order between the different technai and different types of character within the state can be judged and measured so as to achieve excellence within the state. It reaches the conclusion that it can be measured against the standard of to metrion - due measure. Due measure provides a way of articulating a qualitative state of order ('what is fitting, the right moment, what is as it ought to be') in quantitative terms – and thus of expressing it objectively and determinately. It provides a basis for the statesman to judge accurately and objectively how he should act on each occasion so as to achieve order in the state. Furthermore, it does so in terms which can take account of specific and changing circumstances and contexts,¹ and so can cope with the reality of the world within in which the statesman lives.

¹ Through the incorporation of kairos within the standard of due measure as discussed in chapter seven.

In the *Republic* aretê was presented as the pursuit of order within the individual soul as well as within the state. In the *Statesman*, however, the focus is upon achieving order in the state, by creating balance and harmony between the different types of citizens and technai within the state. I would suggest that this points to a growing conviction on Plato's part that the order which is the basis of aretê is achieved by an individual citizen through the part he or she plays within the state (i.e. the extent to which they contribute to the order of the state) and that their contribution is achieved through the intervention of the statesman. On this account, individual aretê is achieved when the individual contributes to the order (aretê) of the state to the best of their ability. Gould (1955) suggests that the ethical philosophy of the early Socratic dialogues presents an individual model of aretê which gradually develops through dialogues including the *Meno*, *Republic*, *Timaeus*, *Politicus* and *Philebus* to the collective model of aretê which emerges in the *Laws*, where the state is the source of aretê through the laws and through the way in which it educates and rules its citizens.² It could be argued that the development of a collective model of aretê can be seen in the way that Socrates' account of aretê as the art of measurement develops from the measurement of *individual* goodness in the *Protagoras*, through the *Gorgias*,³ to the measurement of goodness within the *state* in the *Statesman*. However, I do not accept Gould's view that by the later dialogues, Plato has accepted that aretê is 'beyond the reach of the majority' and can only exist in the state as a whole, rather than in the individual. Instead, I support Christopher Bobonich's argument (2002, Chapter 10) that the *Statesman* represents a progression towards a model where the intervention of the state is the basis for individual aretê and happiness. The *Statesman's* application of due measure has a key role in achieving aretê for each individual by enabling them to contribute, to the best of their ability, to order in the state.

In the *Protagoras*, Socrates set out to sketch the type of wisdom which is sufficient for aretê and can thus be the salvation of our lives. The *Statesman*, in depicting the basilikê technê (311c5) as the art of measurement against the standard of due measure, completes the sketch of aretê as the art of measurement which Socrates began in the *Protagoras*. It develops the *Protagoras'* original sketch of aretê as the

² A key aspect of this development, according to Gould, is the emergence of a 'reality principle' as Plato comes to recognise that knowledge cannot apply to the sensible world of particulars. 'This puts it beyond the reach of the majority who are, of course, immersed in the sensible world.' (p.193)

³ Where, as I discussed in chapter five, Socrates suggests that individual aretê requires the intervention of the politician.

metrêtikê technê, by underpinning it with an account of aretê as order within the state, the while retaining its essential strengths by offering:

- a determinate basis for the statesman to make decisions about how citizens should live, through its foundation upon an objective and quantifiable standard for a good state [to metrion];
- an account of each citizen's motivation to act consistently upon the statesman's judgement of what it is right to do. The Stranger claims that basilikê technê will result in a state where the lives of its citizens are as happy as possible.⁴ I would suggest that underpinning this claim is an account of real pleasure (such as Socrates put forward in *Republic IX*) as the pursuit of order within in the soul. It is by acting upon the judgements of the statesman that each citizen will, as far as possible, achieve order in their own soul and thus maximise their own pleasure.

In achieving this, the basilikê technê represents the culmination of a process of developing and refining the metrêtikê technê through the *Gorgias*, *Phaedo* and *Republic*. Socrates returns⁵ at the end of the *Statesman* to confirm that they have indeed completed [apotelein, 311c7] their search for the statesman. However, in doing so he also marks the completion another much longer search⁶ for the 'sôtêria tou biou'. Rowe's translation brings out well the fact that a portrait has been completed:

[Old Socrates] Another most excellent portrait, Stranger, this one that you have completed for us, of the man who possesses the art of kingship: the statesman. (311c7 – 8, Rowe, 1995a)

I would suggest, however, that the picture which has been completed is not only a portrait of the statesman but also a sketch of the type of wisdom which would be sufficient for aretê and which thus represents the 'sôtêria tou biou'.

⁴ Then let us say that this marks the completion of the fabric which is the product of the art of statesmanship: the weaving together, with regular intertwining, of the dispositions of brave and moderate people – when the expertise belonging to the king brings their life together in agreement and friendship and makes it common between them, completing the most magnificent and best of all fabrics and covering with all the other inhabitants of cities, both slave and free; and holds them together with this twining and rules and directs without, so far as it belongs to a city to be happy, falling short of that in any respect. (311b – c, Rowe, 1995a).

⁵ See Rowe (1995a, p.245) for the arguments for attributing the final statement of the dialogue to Socrates himself.

⁶ And I would speculate that this may be another reason for his return.

It remains as a sketch, however, because there is still more work to do. In particular, the *Statesman* leaves unexplored the key question of how, in practice, the standard of due measure, by which the statesman rules the state, relates to the absolute truth about what is good – this connection is only hinted at. I would suggest that this question is left for the *Philebus* and the *Timaeus*. Both dialogues move away from the political world of the *Statesman*, yet both are concerned with the principle of due measure. In the *Philebus*, this is in relation to the balance of elements within goodness and in the *Timaeus* it is in relation to the mathematical principles which underpin cosmic order. In these dialogues, the sketch of sôtêria tou biou' will develop into a fuller illustration which will place the kosmos, which is the basis of due measure, in the context of the broader truth upon which due measure is founded.

Bibliography

- Adam, J. & Adam, A.M. (1905) (ed.), *Platonis: Protagoras*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Adkins, A.W.H. (1960), *Merit and Responsibility: a Study in Greek Values*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Adkins, A.W.H. (1973), 'Aretê, Technê, Democracy and Sophists: *Protagoras* 316b – 328d', *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 93: 3 – 12.
- Allen, R.E. (1996) (tr. & comm.), *The Dialogues of Plato Vol. 3*. Newhaven/London: Yale University Press.
- Annas, J. (1981), *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Annas, J. (1999), *Platonic Ethics, Old and New*. London/Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Archer-Hind, R.D. (1973) (ed.), *The Phaedo of Plato*. New York: Arno Press.
- Balansard, A. (2001), *Technê dans les Dialogues de Platon*. Sankt Augustin: Academia.
- Benson, H.H. (2000), *Socratic Wisdom: the Model of Knowledge in Plato's Early Dialogues*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Berman, S. (1991), 'Socrates and Calicles on Pleasure', *Phronesis* 35: 117 -140
- Bluck, R.S. (1955) (tr. & comm.), *Plato's Phaedo*. London; Routledge & Keegan Paul.
- Bobonich, C. (1995), 'Plato's Theory of Goods in the *Laws* and the *Philebus*', *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 11:101-139.
- Bobonich, C. (2002), *Plato's Utopia Recast: His Later Ethics and Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Boys-Stones, G. (2004), 'Phaedo of Elis and Plato on the Soul', *Phronesis* 49(1): 1-23.
- Brunschwig, J. & Lloyd, E.R. (2000) (ed.), *Greek Thought; A Guide to Classical Knowledge*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Burnet, J. (1911) (ed.), *Plato's Phaedo*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Burnyeat, M. (1990) (ed. & tr.), *The Theaetetus of Plato*. Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett.
- Canto-Sperber, M. (1991) (tr.), *Platon: Ménon*. Paris: Flammarion.
- Capra, A. (2001), *Agôn Logôn: Il Protagora di Platone tra Eristica e Commedia*. Milan: LED.
- Coby, P. (1987) *Socrates and the Sophistic Enlightenment*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press.
- Cole, A.T. (1972) 'The Relativism of Protagoras', *Yale Classical Studies* 22: 19 - 45.
- Cooper, J.M & Hutchinson, D.S. (1997) (ed.), *Plato: Complete Works*. Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett.
- Curd, P. & McKirahan, R.D. (1996) (ed. & tr.), *A Presocratics Reader*. Indianapolis: Hackett.
- De Romilly, J. (1983), 'Réflexions sur le Courage chez Thucydide et chez Platon', *Révue des Études Grecques* 93: 307 – 323.
- Devereux, D. (1975), 'Protagoras on Courage and Knowledge: *Protagoras* 351a - b', *Apeiron* 9(2): 37 - 39.
- Dodds, E.R. (1959) (ed.), *Plato: Gorgias*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Dorter, K. (1994), *Form and Good in Plato's Eleatic Dialogues; the Parmenides Theaetetus, Sophist and Statesman*. Berkeley/London: University of California Press.
- Duncan, R. (1980), 'Courage in Plato's *Protagoras*', *Phronesis* 23: 216 - 228.

- Dyson, M. (1976), 'Knowledge and Hedonism in Plato's *Protagoras*', *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 96: 32 – 45.
- Everson, S. (1990) (ed), *Epistemology (Companions to Ancient Thought 1)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Findlay, J.N. (1974), *Plato: The Written and Unwritten Doctrines*. London: Routledge & Keegan Paul.
- Fine, G. (1990), 'Knowledge and Belief in *Republic* V – VII' in Everson 1990: 85 – 115.
- Fine, G. (1996), 'Conflicting Appearances: *Theaetetus* 153d – 154b' in Gill & McCabe 1996:105 -134.
- Fine, G. (1999) (ed.), *Plato: Metaphysics and Epistemology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Frede, D. (1996) 'The Hedonist's Conversion: The Role of Socrates in the *Philebus*' in Gill & McCabe: 213 – 248.
- Furley, D.J. & Allen, R.E. (1970 - 75) (ed.), *Studies in Presocratic Philosophy: Vol. 1, The Beginnings of Philosophy*. London: Routledge & Keegan Paul.
- Gallop, D. (1964), 'The Socratic Paradox in the *Protagoras*', *Phronesis* 9: 117 – 129.
- Gallop, D. (1975) (tr. & comm.), *Plato: Phaedo*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Gerson, L. (2003), 'The Development of a Doctrine of the Good and Plato's Development' in Reale & Scolnicov 2003: 379 – 394.
- Gill, C. (1995), 'Rethinking Constitutionalism in *Statesman* 291 –203' in Rowe 1995b: 292 - 305.
- Gill, C. & McCabe, M.M. (1996) (ed.), *Form and Argument in Late Plato*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Gill, M.L. & Ryan, P. (1996) (tr & int.), *Plato: Parmenides*. Indianapolis: Hackett.
- Gooch, P.W.M. (1974), 'The relation between wisdom and virtue in *Phaedo* 69a6 – c3', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 12(2):153 – 159.
- Gosling, J.C.B. (1973), *Plato*. London: Routledge & Keegan Paul.
- Gosling, J.C.B. & Taylor, C.C.W. (1982), *The Greeks on Pleasure*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Gould, J. (1955), *The Development of Plato's Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gower, B. S. & Stokes, M.C. (1992) (ed.), *Socratic Questions*. London: Routledge.
- Grube, G.M.A (1997) (tr.), *Plato: Republic* (rev. Reeve, C.D.C), in Cooper & Hutchinson 1997.
- Guthrie, W.K.C. (1956) (tr.), *Plato: Protagoras and Meno*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Guthrie, W.K.C. (1962 - 81), *A History of Greek Philosophy. Vol. 1 The Earlier Presocratics and the Pythagoreans*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hackforth, R. (ed. & tr.) (1955), *Plato's Phaedo*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Halliwel, S. (1993) (tr. & comm.), *Plato: Republic 5*. Warminster: Aris & Phillips.
- Harte, V. (2002), *Plato on Parts and Wholes: the Metaphysics of Structure*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Hubbard, B.A.F. & Karnofsky, E.S. (1982), *Plato's Protagoras, a Socratic Commentary*. London: Duckworth.
- Hursthouse, R. (1998), 'A False Doctrine of the Mean', in Sherman 1998:105 – 120.
- Hussey, E. (1972), *The Presocratics*. London: Duckworth.
- Hussey, E. (1990), 'The beginnings of epistemology: from Homer to Philolaus' in Everson 1990:11 – 98.
- Ildefonse, F. (1997), *Platon: Protagoras*. Paris: Flammarion.
- Irwin, T. (1977), *Plato's Moral Theory: the Early and Middle Dialogues*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press).
- Irwin, T. (1979) (tr. & notes), *Plato: Gorgias*. Oxford/New York: Clarendon Press/Oxford University Press.

- Irwin, T. (1995), *Plato's Ethics*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jones, W.H.S. (1923) (ed. & tr.), *Hippocrates Vol II* = Loeb Classical Library 148. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Jouanna, J. (1999), *Hippocrates*. Baltimore, Md/London: John Hopkins University Press.
- Jowett, B. (1953) (tr.), *The Dialogues of Plato Vol 1*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Kahn, C. H. (1995) 'The Place of the *Statesman* in Plato's later work' in Rowe 1995b: 49 – 60.
- Kahn, C. H. (1996), *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue. The Philosophical Use of a Literary Form*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kato, S. (1995), 'The Role of Paradeigma in the *Statesman*', in Rowe 1995b: 162 – 172.
- Kirk, G.S., Raven, J.E. & Schofield, M. (1983), *The Presocratic Philosophers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Klosko, G. (1979), 'Towards a Consistent Interpretation of the *Protagoras*', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 61: 125 – 142.
- Klosko, G. (1980), 'On the Analysis of *Protagoras* 351b – 360e', *Phoenix* 34(4): 307 - 322.
- Lafrance, Y. (1995), 'Metretique, Mathematiques et Dialectique en *Politique* 283c – 285c', in Rowe 1995b: 89 – 101.
- Lane, M. (1995), 'A New Angle on Utopia: The Political Theory of the *Statesman*', in Rowe 1995b: 276 – 291.
- Lane, M. (1998), *Method and Politics in Plato's Statesman*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lee, H.D.P. (1987) (tr.), *Plato: The Republic*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Lombardo, S. & Bell, K. (1992) (tr. & notes with intr. by Frede, M.), *Plato: Protagoras*. Indianapolis: Hackett.
- Loriaux, R. (1969 - 75), *Le Phédon de Platon*. Namur/Gembloux: Secrétariat de Publications, Facultés Universitaires.
- Luce, J.V. (1944) 'A Discussion of *Phaedo* 69a6 – c2', *Classical Quarterly* 38: 60 - 64.
- McCabe, M.M. (1994), *Plato's Individuals*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- McCabe, M.M. (1996), 'Unity in the *Parmenides*: the Unity of the *Parmenides*' in Gill & McCabe 1996: 5 – 48.
- McCabe, M.M. (2000), *Plato and his Predecessors: the Dramatisation of Reason*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Moser, S. & Kustas, G. L. (1996), 'A Comment on the "Relativism" of the *Protagoras*', *Phoenix* 20: 111 – 115.
- Nichols Jr., J.H. (1998) (tr. & comm.), *Plato: Gorgias*. Ithaca/New York/London: Cornell University Press.
- Notomi, N. (1999), *The Unity of Plato's Sophist*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nussbaum, M. (1986), *The Fragility of Goodness; Luck & Ethics in Greek Tragedy & Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Osborne, C. (1996), 'Space, Time, Shape and Direction: Creative Discourse in the *Timaeus*' in Gill & McCabe 1996: 179 – 212.
- Owen, G.E.L. (1999) 'Plato on Not-Being' in Fine 1999: 416 - 454.
- Phillips, E.D. (1973), *Greek Medicine*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- Porębski, C. (2002), 'Plato between Ethics and Politics' in Reale and Scolnicov 2002: 283 – 293.
- Reale, G. (2002), 'The One-Good as the Load-bearing Concept in Plato's Protology in Particular in the *Republic* and its Relations to the Demiurge' in Reale & Scolnicov 2002: 29 – 48.

- Reale, G. & Scolnicov, S. (2002) (eds.), *New Images of Plato: Dialogues on the Idea of the Good*. Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag.
- Reeve, C.D.C (2004) (tr. & int.), *Plato: Republic*. Indianapolis, Hackett.
- Richardson, H.S. (1990), 'Measurement, Pleasure and Practical Science in Plato's *Protagoras*', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 28: 7 – 32.
- Roochnik, D. (1994), 'The Goodness of *Arithmos*', *American Journal of Philology* 115: 543 – 563.
- Roochnik, D. (1996), *Of Art and Wisdom: Plato's Understanding of *Technê**. University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Rosen, S. (1995), *Plato's Statesman: The Web of Politics*. Newhaven/London: Yale University Press.
- Rowe, C.J. (1993) (ed.), *Plato: Phaedo*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rowe, C.J. (1995a), *Plato: Statesman*. Warminster: Aris & Phillips.
- Rowe, C.J. (1995b) (ed.), *Reading the Statesman: Proceedings of the III Symposium Platonicum*. Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag.
- Rowe, C.J. (1996), 'The *Politicus*: Structure and Form' in Gill & McCabe 1996:153 – 178.
- Rowe, C.J. (2003), 'Socrates and Plato on Virtue and the Good: an Analytical Approach' in Reale & Scolnicov 2003: 253 – 264.
- Rudebusch, G. (1992), 'Calicles' Hedonism', *Ancient Philosophy* 12: 53 -71.
- Rudebusch, G. (1999) *Socrates, Pleasure and Value*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Russell, D. (2000), 'Protagoras and Socrates on Courage and Pleasure: *Protagoras* 349d *ad finem*', *Ancient Philosophy* 20: 311 – 338.
- Russell, D. (2005), *Plato on Pleasure and the Good Life*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Rutherford, R.B. (1995), *The Art of Plato*. London: Duckworth.
- Santa Cruz, M. I. (1995) 'Methodes d'Explication et la Juste Mesure dans le *Politique*', in Rowe 1995b:190 – 199.
- Santas, G. (1966) 'Plato's *Protagoras* and Explanations of Weakness', *Philosophical Review* 75: 3 –33.
- Santas, G. (2001), *Goodness and Justice: Plato, Aristotle and the Moderns*. Malden, Mass/Oxford: Blackwell.
- Santas, G. (2003), 'The Form of the Good as Paradigm and its Essence' in Reale & Scolnicov 2003: 359 – 378.
- Schofield, M. (1996), 'Likeness and Likenesses in the *Parmenides*' in Gill & McCabe 1996: 49 –78.
- Scott, D. (1999) 'Platonic Recollection', in Fine 1999: 93 - 124.
- Sedley, D. (1996), 'Three Platonist Interpretations of the *Theaetetus*' in Gill & McCabe 1996: 79 –104.
- Sherman, N. (1999) (ed.), *Aristotle's Ethics: Critical Essays*. Lanham, Md/Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Skemp, J.B. (1952) (tr. & comm.), *Plato's Statesman*. London: Routledge & Keegan Paul.
- Slings, S.R. (2003 (ed.), *Platonis Rempublicam*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Stokes, M.C. (1986), *Plato's Socratic conversations – Drama and Dialectic in Three Dialogues*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Sullivan, J.P. (1961), 'The Hedonism of Plato's *Protagoras*', *Phronesis* 6: 10 – 28.
- Szlezak, T.A. (1999), *Reading Plato*. London: Routledge.
- Taormina, D.P. (2004), 'Il *logos* di Prodicò: *Protagoras*, 337a1 – c4', *Protagoras (II) di Platone (congrès)*: 375 – 389.
- Taylor, A.E. (1911), *Varia Socratica*. Oxford: J. Parker & Co..
- Taylor, A.E. (1926), *Plato; The Man and His Work*. London: Methuen.
- Taylor, C.C.W. (1991) (tr. & notes), *Plato: Protagoras*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Tordesillas, A. (1995), 'Le Point Culminant de la Metretique' in Rowe 1995b:102 - 11.

- Vlastos, G. (1947), 'Equality and Justice in Early Greek Cosmogonies', reprinted in Furley & Allen 1970: 56 – 91.
- Vlastos, G. (1956) (tr. & comm.), *Plato, Protagoras*, Jowett's Translation revised by Martin Ostwald. Indianapolis & New York.
- Vlastos, G. (1964), 'Isonomia Politikê', in Vlastos 1973: 164 - 203.
- Vlastos, G. (1969), 'Socrates on Acrasia', *Phoenix* 23: 71 -88.
- Vlastos, G. (1973), *Platonic Studies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Vlastos, G. (1991), *Socrates, Ironist and Moral Philosopher*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wedberg, A. (1955), *Plato's Philosophy of Mathematics*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell.
- Weiss, R. (1985), 'Courage, Confidence and Wisdom in the *Protagoras*', *Ancient Philosophy* 5: 11 - 24.
- Weiss, R. (1987), 'The Right Exchange: *Phaedo* 69a6 – c3', *Ancient Philosophy* 7: 57 - 66.
- Weiss, R. (1989), 'The Hedonic Calculus in the *Protagoras* and the *Phaedo*', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 27: 511 – 529.
- Weiss, R. (1995), 'Statesman as Epistemon: Caretaker, Physician and Weaver' in Rowe 1995b: 225 – 226.
- White, F.C. (1990), 'The Good in Plato's *Gorgias*', *Phronesis* 35:117 - 227.
- White, N.P. (1993) (tr & int.), *Plato: Sophist*. Indianapolis: Cambridge.
- Wilson, J.R. (1980), 'KAIROS as "Due Measure",' *Glotta*: 177 - 204.
- Woodruff, P. (1990), 'Plato's Early Theory of Knowledge', in Everson 1990:60 - 84
- Woolf, R. (2002), 'Consistency and Akrasia in Plato's *Protagoras*', *Phronesis* 47: 224 - 252.
- Zeyl, D. (1980), 'Socrates and Hedonism: *Protagoras* 351b – 358d', *Phronesis* 25: 250 – 269.

